

# EXPLORING FATALISM IN ADOLESCENTS

by

**Marthinus Ryk Brink**

(BA BTh PGCE)

*Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements*

*for the degree of*

*Master of Education in Educational Support*

*in the Faculty of Education*



*at*

*Stellenbosch University*

Supervisors: Dr Marietjie Oswald  
Ms Mariechen Perold

April 2014

## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study used an interpretive paradigm within a theoretical framework of social cognitive theory to explore fatalism within the context of the lived experiences of adolescents. A tentative assumption was made that fatalism among adolescents may be at the root of a variety of recognisable behavioural and educational problems that manifest in South African society. At the same time the study aimed to investigate how fatalism may manifest in and colour the lived experiences of adolescents, as well to investigate how fatalism possibly affects educational attainment. This study was informed by a literature review which addressed the different theoretical perspectives pertaining to the etiology of fatalism. The literature was approached from a very wide perspective, including contributions from the various disciplines in the field of social sciences including theology, philosophy, psychology and social theory. These insights were complemented by perspectives from educational psychology particularly with regard to adolescent development and learning theory. The sample of the study constituted of 164 grade 11 learners from five schools in the Western Cape. Data was collected by making use of creative strategies, focus groups and personal interviews. This study found the following: adolescent fatalism seems to emanate from the lived experiences of adolescents as a cognitive phenomenon, rooted in the deterministic beliefs of adolescents about their selves, others, as well as the physical and social environments, with behavioural, affective and psychological consequences. Adolescent fatalism colour their lived experiences by causing alienation from those experiences, oppositional behaviour and feelings of pessimism, anxiety and depression. Adolescent fatalism seems to affect educational attainment by contributing to fixed implicit theories of academic potential, low level of motivation, disengagement from the educational system and the social aspects of learning.

*Key words: adolescent, learner, fatalism, nihilism, social cognitive theory, educational attainment, determinism, compatibilism, soft determinism*

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie kwalitatiewe studie is gedoen binne 'n interpretatiewe paradigma en vanuit die teoretiese raamwerk van die sosiaal-kognitiewe teorie ten einde fatalisme binne die lewensondervindinge van adolessente te ondersoek. 'n Tentatiewe aanname is gemaak dat fatalisme onder adolessente aan die kern van 'n verskeidenheid van herkenbare gedrags- en opvoedkundige probleme in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing mag lê. Verder was die studie daarop gemik om ondersoek in te stel na die manifestering van fatalisme in die lewens van adolessente, hoe dit die lewensondervindinge van adolessente raak en hoe dit die bereiking van opvoedkundige doelwitte beïnvloed. Die studie is gebaseer op 'n literatuuroorsig wat die verskillende teoretiese perspektiewe rakende die etiologie van fatalisme aanspreek. Die literatuuroorsig is vanuit 'n wye perspektief benader en sluit interdisiplinêre bydraes uit die veld van die sosiale wetenskappe byvoorbeeld teologie, filosofie, sielkunde en sosiale teorie. Hierdie insigte is gekombineer met perspektiewe uit die opvoedkundige sielkunde, spesifiek ten opsigte van adolessente ontwikkeling en leerteorie. Die steekproef vir die studie het uit 164 leerders uit 5 skole bestaan. Data is ingesamel deur van kreatiewe strategieë asook fokusgroep en individuele onderhoude gebruik te maak. In hierdie studie is die volgende bevindinge gemaak: adolessente fatalisme blyk uit die lewensondervindinge van adolessente te voorskyn te kom. Dit manifesteer as 'n kognitiewe fenomeen wat gewortel is in die deterministiese geloof van adolessente aangaande hulself, ander, sowel as die fisieke en sosiale omgewings, met gedrags-, affektiewe en sielkundige gevolge. Adolessente fatalisme kleur hul lewenservaringe deur hulle van daardie ervaringe te vervreem, tot weerstandige gedrag aanleiding te gee en gevoelens van pessimisme, ang en depressie te veroorsaak. Adolessente fatalisme blyk ook die bereiking van opvoedkundige doelwitte te beïnvloed deurdat dit aanleiding gee tot vaste implisiete teorieë oor akademiese potensiaal, lae vlakke van motivering meebring, onttrekking uit die opvoedkundige stelsel aan die hand werk en die sosiale aspekte van leer beïnvloed.

*Sleutelwoorde: adolessent, leerder, fatalisme, nihilisme, sosiaal-kognitiewe teorie, behaal van opvoedkundige doelwitte, determinisme, sagte determinisme, kompatibalisme.*

## **DECLARATION**

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: 20 February 2014

*Copyright © 2014 Stellenbosch University*

*All rights reserved*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*I dedicate this work to the loving memory of my companion in life, mentor, and spiritual director, the Revd. Fr. Lyle Redelinghuys (SCC).*

I thank the following persons who made this study possible:

My supervisors, Marietjie Oswald and Mariechen Perold, for their guidance and academic support.

My mother, Rita Brink, for her loving support, prayers, encouragement and her example of faith and resilience which partially inspired this study;

My brothers, Casper and Danie Brink, for their continuous encouragement and assistance.

My dearest friend and appreciated colleague, Marisa Fox, for her inspiration, support, motivation and friendship; and for managing my absence at school during the research;

My colleague and friend, Anneldé Raats, for her inspiration and loyal support which enabled me to spend time away from school; and for carrying my work load for the time I was away from school;

Patrick Bolttler, my friend and colleague, for editing the manuscript.

Finally I would like to thank the grade 11 learners, the research participants. They opened their lives and often their hearts to me. Without their positive attitude and spontaneous participation, this study would not be possible.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
OPSOMMING .....	ii
DECLARATION .....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
CHAPTER 1.....	1
CONTEXT AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY .....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	10
1.3 RESEARCH PLAN.....	15
1.4 THE INTEGRATION OF THE DATA .....	23
1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	23
1.6 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS .....	24
1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY .....	27
1.8 CONCLUSION .....	28
CHAPTER 2.....	29
LITERATURE REVIEW: EXPLORATION OF FATALISM AS CONSTRUCT .....	29
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	29
2.2 A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE NOTION OF FATALISM .....	34
2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	64
2.4 CONCLUSION .....	85

CHAPTER 3.....	87
LITERATURE REVIEW: INFLUENCES OF ADOLESCENCE IN FATALISM .....	87
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	87
3.2 PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES OF ADOLESCENCE .....	88
3.3 SOCIAL DETERMINANTS IN ADOLESCENTS .....	114
3.4 BEHAVIOURAL DETERMINANTS IN ADOLESCENTS .....	120
3.5 CONCLUSION .....	123
CHAPTER 4.....	124
DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE INQUIRY .....	124
4.1 INTRODUCTION.....	124
4.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM .....	125
4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN .....	139
4.4 QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY .....	141
4.5 RESEARCH PROCEDURES .....	143
4.6 THE QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH .....	158
4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	164
4.8 CONCLUSION .....	165
CHAPTER 5.....	167
PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....	167
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	167
5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	169
<b>5.4 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>5.5 REFLECTION ON THE FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>213</b>

<b>5.6 CONCLUSION</b> .....	214
CHAPTER 6.....	216
CONCLUSIONS TO FINDINGS; RECOMMENDATIONS; LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY.....	216
6.1 INTRODUCTION.....	216
6.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH STUDY .....	216
6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY.....	217
6.4 CONCLUSION .....	218
6.6 STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY .....	226
6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS .....	226
6.8 FURTHER RESEARCH .....	227
REFERENCES .....	229
ADDENDUM A:.....	250
LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE WCED.....	250
ADDENDUM B:.....	252
CLEARANCE FROM THE RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE - HUMAN RESEARCH (HUMANITIES) OF STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY .....	252
ADDENDUM C:.....	255
LETTERS REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS .....	255
ADDENDUM D:.....	260
LETTERS OF PERMISSION GRANTED BY THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS .....	260
ADDENDUM E:.....	266
LETTER OF ASSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS .....	266



ADDENDUM F: .....	269
LETTER OF PARENTAL CONSENT .....	269
ADDENDUM G: .....	274
LETTER OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS.....	274
ADDENDUM H.....	278
CHRONOLOGY OF THE PROCESS OF INQUIRY .....	278
ADDENDUM I: .....	280
EXCERPT FROM THE FOCUS GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS .....	280

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 The Powe fatalism model (PFM) .....	31
Figure 2.2 Concepts of determinism before the Common Era .....	39
Figure 2.3 Concepts of determinism of the Common Era .....	49
Figure 2.4 Beck's cognitive model.....	65
Figure 2.5 Beck's hierarchy of cognition (Beck, 2011, p. 36 .....	67
Figure 2.6 A hermeneutical model of fatalism .....	71
Figure 2.7 Bandura's model of reciprocal determinism (triadic reciprocal causation).....	73
Figure 2.8 Triadic reciprocal causality .....	74
Figure 3.1 Illustration of grey matter volume maturation over the cortical surface from 5 to 20 years of age .....	100
Figure 4.1 The hermeneutical circle .....	131
Figure 4.2 Factors feeding into the hermeneutical process .....	136
Figure. 4.3 Data sheet for creative strategies phase .....	151

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Synopsis of the notions of fate in Ancient Greek, Hindu, and Roman philosophies and religion .....	36
Table 2.2 The development of theological determinism (predestination or fore-ordination in the Common Era.....	40
Table 3.1: Descriptions and concepts associated with developmental tasks during adolescence.....	110
Table 3.2 Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.25 a day .....	116
Table 4.1: Sample schools: Locus, Demography and Languages .....	145
Table 4.2 Timeline of the data collection process.....	147
Table 4.3 Analysis of the number of research participants per school .....	150
Table 4.4 Interview guide for focus group.....	154
Table 5.1 Themes, categories and sub-categories .....	168

## CHAPTER 1

### CONTEXT AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This qualitative study explored fatalism within the context of the lived experiences<sup>1</sup> of adolescents. At the same time the study aimed to investigate how fatalistic beliefs may influence educational attainment in adolescents. A tentative assumption was made that fatalism among adolescents may be at the root of a variety of recognisable behavioural and educational problems that manifest in South African society. The exploration of fatalism in adolescents may prove valuable in describing the phenomenon as well as understanding the typical behaviour, attitudes and values that may be associated with fatalism in this particular developmental phase. This inquiry may also serve the purpose of informing educational policy and the construction of specific intervention methods to address the needs of adolescents in the education system in relevant ways.

Fatalism has been defined as “a philosophical doctrine holding that all events are predetermined in advance and human beings are powerless to change them” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fatalism>.) This definition postulates fatalism as consisting of several important aspects or dimensions. Firstly there is the dimension of the belief in a predetermined outcome of the world and, secondly, the implied belief that there may be a force at work outside of oneself that determines the outcomes of one’s life rendering the self without agency. A third dimension is also relevant in defining fatalism although falling outside the immediate scope of the above definition: the belief in “randomness” or “chance” which also implies an external locus of control, albeit indeterminate or random. The belief in chance seems fundamental in the understanding of fatalism. Chance is constitutive of the idea that things happen

---

<sup>1</sup> Lived experiences. In the phenomenological approach to human research, the term ‘lived experiences’ refers to a description of the world as we experience it without prior theory or the mandate use of taxonomical descriptions, classification or abstracting of what is described. Please see Section 1.5 for an explanation of the term ‘lived experiences’ in this inquiry.

randomly without any form of control. The three dimensions implicated in defining fatalism give way to the idea that a specific set of beliefs underpins fatalism (Shen, Condit and Wright, 2009, p. 1), which may influence behaviour.

Through the review of various sources it became evident that researchers tend to connect fatalism to a specific situation or problem (e.g., the studies on cancer fatalism by Powe in 1995 that will be discussed in chapter two). This strategy is preferred and regards the phenomenon as a broad and general construct that encompasses all. For this reason fatalism often occurs in the literature with an adjectival noun such as ‘cancer fatalism’ or ‘political fatalism’. This may mean that the three broad dimensions may still be valid in all circumstances that could be described as fatalistic, but with different accents. It may also be that new dimensions specific to a given circumstance, or set of circumstances, may emerge with new research.

The construct, ‘fatalism,’ has been applied to a variety of research areas pertaining children and education and thereby gained a certain amount of conceptual clarity and validity which has been thoroughly discussed in the literature review in this inquiry. (See Chapters two and three for the contributions of Garrison and Garrison (1975); Biddlecom, Gregory, Lloyd and Mensch (2008); Drew & Schoenberg (2011); Kalichman, Kelly, Morgan and Rompa (1997); and Bray, Gooskens, Kahn, Moses and Seekings (2010) .

### **1.1.1 Motivation for the study**

#### ***1.1.1.1 “Ubuntu” – Our humanity is defined by others***

The recognition of the classical African concept of Ubuntu is important to this study. ‘Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu or ubuntu’, when freely translated, means ‘a human being becomes a human being through participation in a community of other human selves’ (Mkhize, 2006, p. 28). A person lives in social and communal relationships. Living in these social relationships requires an on-going participation in a community with others like oneself (Mkhize, 2006, p. 28). The way in which adolescents interact

with others within their particular context, as well as the way in which others respond to them, may influence their understanding of themselves.

A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened *and believes* (own cursive) that others are able and good, based from a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you cannot exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. (Tutu, 1999, pp. 34-35)

When adolescents reach the stage when they begin to assess and interpret their own lived experiences, they may also become aware of the fact that the self and the world are interconnected. The development of an increasing understanding of the self and the world around them forms a significant part of adolescents' cognitive development (Erikson, 1968, as discussed in Sokol, 2009, pp. 3-4). They develop an enhanced capacity for abstract thinking that slowly forges their understanding of the world and creates their lived experiences (Sokol, 2009, pp. 3-4; Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2010, pp. 64-65; Dupree in: Swanson, Edwards & Spencer, 2010, p. 65). This does not happen in isolation, but is woven into the fabric of the world surrounding them; the social and physical environment in which they live, learn and develop (Bray, et.al, 2010, pp. 38; 46). This also constitutes the developmental context for adolescents in post-apartheid South Africa (Bray et al., 2010, pp. 38-46). They begin to interpret the world around them in terms of their own experience and identity (Garrison & Garrison, 1975, pp. 108-109; Sokol, 2009, pp. 3-4). Deeply under the impression of their environment and own circumstances, they develop their own world views, which serve as constructs by which they assess their own lived experiences and attach certain values to it (Bianchi, Fichnova, Hamranova, Lasticova & Sramova, 2008, p.196).

The adolescent stage is considered an important milestone of personal identity formation. During this period an individual is aware of his feelings, values and aims. He is looking for a place in society. In a process of

identity maturing it is very important to pay attention to the formation of value systems, aspiration levels and identifying of life priorities. The developmental stage of adolescence, forming a transitory period between childhood and adulthood, is at the same time a period of identity fulfillment, bringing genuineness and singularity (Bianchi et al., 2008, p.196).

It is safe to say that the way in which adolescents think and reason is influenced greatly by the world they live in (Donald et al., 2010, p. 38-39). Their lived experiences (including their physical environments and social conditions) are often not easily altered, but the way in which adolescents view and interact with the world and people around them is something to which educators and counsellors should be alerted (Woolfolk, 2013, pp. 399-400). The way in which the environment influences the cognitive processes in adolescents brings Bandura's social cognitive theory as an important discourse into the discussion of fatalism in adolescents (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175; Bandura, 2002, p. 269). Social cognitive theory will inform the chosen theoretical framework for this study.

Adolescents grow up in a maelstrom of circumstances, immersed in a rapidly changing, challenging and sometimes very hostile world. The purpose of this research is to contribute to the process of care and support in education – in essence, to contribute to the pastoral role of the educator in understanding possible fatalism in adolescents, which in turn may help to find positive ways of intervention and life-help. As a secondary effect of this study I want to advocate for instilling the notion of “reasonable hope” (Weingarten, 2010) into the lived experiences of adolescents. Weingarten describes reasonable hope as something both sensible and moderate, directing our attention to what is within reach rather than what may be desired but unattainable. In other words, it is hope focused on what is attainable in a given situation. By focusing on what is attainable, we soften the polarity between hope and despair. This means that more people can position themselves in the category of the hopeful. Weingarten (2009, pp. 4-5) mentioned five characteristics of reasonable hope: it exists and flourishes in a personal relationship between people; it is pragmatic it cannot be given to someone, but is something done to encourage people to work towards a chosen future; it sees the future as open, uncertain and

malleable; and it is focused on seeking goals and finding ways to realise them. Reasonable hope accommodates doubt, contradictions and despair. The concept of reasonable hope can be introduced into any modus of therapy since it “infuses an attitude, informs a stance, and opens areas of inquiry that might otherwise not be undertaken” (Weingarten, 2009, p. 6). ‘Hopefully’ this inquiry will contribute towards giving adolescents reasonable hope with which they can find the resilience and courage to shape their own futures regardless of the challenges they may face.

Through this inquiry I also hope to contribute to the understanding of adolescent behaviour as well as to the interventions educators are able to employ. This inquiry hopes to propagate life-hope and self-efficacy in adolescents, enabling them to engage optimally with their own processes of education while attaining optimum outcomes. Oswald and Perold (2011, p. 30) placed *ubuntu* within a therapeutic and research focus and argued that our lives are embedded within deeply interwoven relationships. This has specific meaning for the relationship between the educator or counsellor and the adolescents. Relationships place educators and counsellors in natural positions of support. These relationships become the environment in which people in the helping professions may be able to help, to co-create hope with and for others. This could create an environment within which appropriate intervention may take place (Oswald and Perold, 2011, p. 30).

Appropriate intervention may be successful in an environment that is equipped with positive models for learning, especially when new behaviour and views of looking at the world is to be learnt (Woolfolk, 2013, p. 403). If adolescents find themselves in an environment in which they are left to their own devices, without structure, direction, order and/or positive models to emulate, they may develop fatalistic mind-sets. Fatalism in adolescents, as in the case of adults, may inhibit the learning of behaviour that encourages self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994, p. 71), hope (Christensen, Moran, Ehlers, Raichie, Karmell, Funk and Funk (1999, pp. 407-418) and self-development, because the perception may exist that their lives are controlled by external forces over which they have no control (Straugham and Seow (1998, p.85-115). This is consistent with the thinking of Bandura (1989, p. 1175). He alluded to self-efficacy as a powerful mechanism of personal agency. He described self-efficacy beliefs as people’s beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over



events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs function as an influential set of proximal determinants that influence the individual's motivational levels, affect and actions (Bandura, 1989, p.1175). De Minzi (2003, p. 238) noted that adolescents often feel that they are "on their own" and that their lived experiences are controlled by external forces. This may cause alienation from the formal processes of education, because they fail to see how this can help to change or improve their circumstances. Often, this may lead to passive coping, which presents itself in behavioural traits like the evasion of stressors through excessive investing in close friends, exercise and/or recreational activities (De Minzi, 2003, p. 328). This process of alienation may result in weak participation in the formal educational processes in society and could be linked to delinquent behaviour and an increase in the number of learners "dropping out" of the system in high school (Garrison and Garrison, 1975, pp. 281-284).

My perception is that some behavioural and social problems in adolescence may be rooted in attitudes and values of the community in which they live. A fatalistic mind-set may reciprocate with nihilism in the wider community in which the adolescent lives. Corresponding with Powe and Johnson (1995, p. 123) one could argue that, if society allows fatalism to grow among its youth, it could lead to an even greater reinforcement of nihilism as a wider social phenomenon. Some groups (communities, cultural groups etc.) display nihilistic beliefs about themselves and the world (Williams, 1997, 109-117; Ncgobo, 1999, 138-154). These nihilistic traits are communicated in relationships and are often reinforced in and by interpersonal transactions. Bandura (2002, pp. 271-273) argued the close relationship between the individual and the group and the effect of the group on the cognitive, affective and behavioural processes in the individual. Bandura (2002, pp. 277-279) described the influence of the group on the individual and how the perceived self-efficacy in the group may affect the self-perceptions and self-efficacy of the individual. When the group has a negative perception of their own efficacy, it may also lead to negative thoughts and feelings in the individual. Nihilistic beliefs in society may therefore have significant consequences on the self-efficacy of individuals. Nihilistic tendencies, like other socio-psychological phenomena, may also come to the fore as attitudes and beliefs that influence behaviour in the individual. Factors such as nihilism in society (Williams, 1997, 109-117; Ncgobo, 1999, pp. 138-154), with

fatalistic thinking as a potential consequence in the adolescent individual, could lead to an ever-widening gap in the adolescent's perception of where he/she is in terms of own development, personal potential, goals and ideals. In time, the individual might fail to reach important markers in his/her development. Consequently, discontent and the perception of failure might increase existing feelings of angst, hopelessness, despair, despondency and fear (Powe and Johnson (1995, p. 120).

#### **1.1.1.2 Adolescent fatalism in South Africa**

Fatalism in adolescents may be embedded in larger, socially grounded conceptions of human behaviour. The possibility exists that it relates to the social, political and economic environment as well as in the current *zeitgeist*<sup>2</sup>. Acevedo (2005, p.83) discussed the theories of Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx regarding fatalism as estrangement or alienation of the individual from the social processes in society (labour, etc.). According to Acevedo (2005, p.83), Durkheim defined fatalism as a feeling of being “unmistakably constrained” and “pitilessly blocked”, while Marx, in his work, *German Ideology*, described how the process of alienation between the worker and the process of labour creates a mind-set of complete helplessness (Lukes 1967, p. 138). A fatalistic mind-set may therefore be characterised by a sense of helplessness and hopelessness (Bernard, Dercon & Tafesse, 2011, p. 3). A fatalistic mind-set may originate from a nihilistic word view of the society or community in which the individual lives. Consequently, nihilism may manifest as the social face of fatalism in the individual. In turn, fatalism may manifest as the individual's response to the worldview of the community or society in which he/she lives as argued before (Powe, & Johnson, 2005, pp.121-122). Various factors, conducive to a nihilistic worldview, can evoke responses such as *angst*<sup>3</sup>, hopelessness, despair and fear in the individual. This may contribute to the belief of not being in control of one's own destiny (Roberts, Roberts & Chen, 2005, p. 239-240).

<sup>2</sup> *Zeitgeist* (German) – the characteristics, mood or quality of a particular period in history as shown by the ideas, beliefs etc. of the time (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 1998, p. 1391)

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this research study, the word “angst” is used, instead of “anxiety”. It refers to the existential angst described by Søren Kierkegaard as “fear, dread, gloom, despair, hopelessness and powerlessness, occurring in various degrees according to the circumstances of the individual”. “Angst” has a specific philosophical and psychological semantic value and is therefore preferred over “anxiety”.

In South Africa, post-apartheid, socio-political, demographic, historical and economic factors, as well as the perception among previously disadvantaged groups<sup>4</sup> of failed or postponed gratification after the end of apartheid, created a sense of nihilism (Bray, et al., 2010, pp. 21-23). This particular *zeitgeist* may be more prevalent in poorer segments of society, but will not be exclusive to them. In my own opinion, nihilism in South African society may have become the social breeding ground for fatalism in the mind of the individual. As adolescents have reached the stage in life where they engage more in abstract thinking (Piaget, 1950, Piaget & Inhelder, 1973) and the formation of their own opinions, a strongly nihilistic environment may influence their thought processes and actions. Fatalism possibly creates a tendency in the individual to look towards environmental rather than personal forces in his/her understanding of life outcomes (Roberts, et. al., 2000, p. 239).

Because a fatalistic mind-set is firmly grounded in an individual's lived experiences, a holistic approach (Donald et al., 2010, p. 37) is needed to explore the phenomenon and eventually create supportive interventions. This holistic approach is well represented by the work of Albert Bandura in his exposition of social cognitive theory. Bandura (2002, pp. 269-290) argued that human agency consists of three modes that describes the events of human development, the way in which we adapt and cope with change, namely individual agency, proxy agency and collective agency. The importance of Bandura's triadic reciprocal theory (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175) in the conceptualisation and understanding of adolescent fatalism is discussed in Chapters two and three of this study.

#### **1.1.1.3 A solution embedded in the National Curriculum**

The possibility that an improved conceptual understanding of fatalistic thinking in adolescents may strengthen the aims of the curriculum in Life Orientation as a school subject served as further motivation for this research inquiry. Life Orientation represents a learning area in the educational context which aims to promote the holistic development of a child (Pillay, 2012, pp. 167-177). *Educational context* refers, here, to all the processes, at school level, entailed in training children's

---

<sup>4</sup> Previously disadvantaged groups - A reference made to segments of the South African population that were denied basic human rights and equal opportunities during the previous regime.

“minds and abilities so that they could acquire knowledge and develop skills” to succeed in life (Oxford South African Secondary School Dictionary, 2011: 195). Life Orientation encompasses and integrates subjects such as Health Education, Life Skills, Career Guidance, Physical Education, Human Rights Education and Religious Education (Department of Education, 2001 in Pillay, 2012, pp. 167-177). The National Curriculum Statement Grades R - 12 serves, *inter alia*, the purpose of “equipping learners, irrespective of their socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability, with the knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment, and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country” (Grades 10 – 12 Life Orientation Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2010, p. 5). Life Orientation seeks to guide learners towards healthy interaction with, and assessment of their entire lived experience, as described in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (2010, p. 10):

“Life Orientation aims to guide and prepare learners to respond appropriately to life’s responsibilities and opportunities; equip learners to interact optimally on a personal, psychological, cognitive, motor, physical, moral, spiritual, cultural and socio-economic level; guide learners to make informed and responsible decisions about their own health and well-being and the health and well-being of others; expose learners to their constitutional rights and responsibilities, to the rights of others and to issues of diversity; equip learners with knowledge, skills and values to make informed decisions about subject choices, careers, additional and higher education opportunities and the world of work; expose learners to various study methods and skills pertaining to assessment processes; and expose learners to an understanding of the value of regular participation in physical activity.” (CAPS, 2010, p.10)

A fatalistic mind-set may potentially hinder the self-fulfilment of the individual and it often leads to choices that do not facilitate meaningful participation in society. Fatalism may influence the choice to engage meaningfully with the formal education system and to develop oneself by acquiring the optimal amount of knowledge and skills. In this regard, the importance of Life Orientation as a school subject within the Further Education and Training (FET) phase comes to the fore as a likely

countermeasure for nihilism in society as well as fatalism in the individual. It forms an essential part of the formal school curriculum in South Africa as it fosters holistic engagement with the educational process as a whole. Life Orientation focuses on the well-being of the learner through the integration of personal factors (beliefs, expectations, attitudes and knowledge), the physical and social environment (resources, consequences of actions, other people, models and educators and physical settings) and behaviour (individual actions, choices and personal statements (Grades 10 – 12 Life Orientation Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement, *sine die*, p.10).

The next section of this chapter presents the challenges which have led to the undertaking of this research inquiry. I also provided a summarised review of literature discussed in more detail in chapters two and three, bearing in mind the rationale of this inquiry.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The rationale for this study, the exploration of possible fatalism in adolescents, originated from research in the medical field. Recent medical research in the field of cancer treatment disclosed that, despite the fact that extensive educational programmes have been deployed in certain communities in the United States, an alarmingly high mortality rate due to preventable diseases still exists. This phenomenon inspired the research done by Barbara Powe (1995) and the subsequent construction of the Powe Fatalism Index (PFI). The PFI is based on the Powe Fatalism Model, which will be discussed in Chapter two. The PFI measures the presence of fatalism in individuals with cancer, providing valuable information regarding the education of individuals and communities about specific health conditions and programmes.

The above research inspired my interest in fatalism as a phenomenon and spawned the idea that fatalism, along with other factors, may be influential in adolescents' engagement with education and consequently, their educational attainment. In reviewing the literature, it became evident that fatalism was a phenomenon that spans various theoretical disciplines – philosophy, theology, psychology and

sociology. An inter-disciplinary approach to study the phenomenon of fatalism therefore seemed imperative.

### **1.2.1 Fatalism as a philosophical, psychological and social construct**

Fatalism was originally described as a philosophical concept, grounded in a specific social context or environment. This has been more extensively discussed in chapter two. The contributions of Søren Kierkegaard (1947); West (1993); Heidegger (1962/1995); Durkheim (1968) and Karl Marx informed the conceptualisation of the construct of adolescent fatalism.

The fact that the philosophers pertinently indicated fatalism, not only as a social phenomenon, but also as a phenomenon embedded in the cognitive processes of the individual, further informs the rationale of this inquiry. The cognitive nature of the construct now required consideration from a psychological perspective. Researchers often used fatalism as concept to describe the origin of specific decisions and behaviour in the individual. Drew and Schoenberg (2011, p. 1) mentioned that specific health behaviour and outcomes can be ascribed to fatalism in patients. Investigators described individuals, who believe that health is a matter of faith or luck and beyond an individual's control, as fatalistic (Straughan & Seow, 1998, p. 2). Fatalism, as a directive mind-set for decision making, becomes the golden thread that links concepts like "locus of control" (Rotter, Seeman and Liverant, 1962, p. 473), "optimism" as opposed to "pessimism" (Steginga & Occhipinti, 2006, pp. 135-137) and "expectancy for the future" (Christensen et al., 1999, p. 407). According to these sources, individual decisions are often influenced by the individual's perception of how much control he or she can exercise over a specific set of circumstances. A lack of control may result in pessimism and despondency, because the individual has the perception that he or she cannot affect a positive outcome. This, in turn, can result in a negative expectancy for the future and hopelessness. Other voices in this discourse, such as the contributions of Duke, Borowsky, Pettingell, Skay and McMorris (2011), Kalichman et. al., (1997), Ward (2007) and Bray et al. (2010) have added to the conceptualisation of adult fatalism in this inquiry as well as to the exploration of its manifestation in adolescent populations and how it possibly colours their lived experiences.

In this inquiry I have explored the possibility of fatalism in adolescents. I attempted a description of the phenomenon from the view point of philosophy and social sciences for the following reasons: Firstly, nihilism is a philosophical concept. Cornel West, an American philosopher (1993, p.19), described nihilism as “a monumental eclipse of hope, a massive collapse of meaning.” Secondly, it may also be characteristic of the prevailing zeitgeist in the society in which the adolescent grows up. Ncgobo (1999, p. 141) refers in this regard to the historical roots of nihilism in the South African community created by land dispossession, racism and terrorising black South Africans under the apartheid regime. Hereby he indicated the causal relationship between historical events and current nihilism in society. Nihilism, as an expression of the zeitgeist in South African society (Ncgobo, 1999, p. 141), may have led to individuals acquiring a fatalistic mind-set. This may also be true for adolescents growing up in this society. Fatalism in the adolescent individual may therefore be associated with a nihilistic zeitgeist. Such a mind-set may influence individual agency for as much as individual beliefs may be influenced by the collective and prevalent beliefs of society (Bandura, 2002, pp. 269-271). These beliefs may be operational in the cognitive processes of the individual. The cognitive nature of these possibly fatalistic beliefs extends the investigation of adolescent fatalism beyond the inquiry of philosophy into the psychological field of inquiry. These conceptual arguments led me to wonder if one can speak of adolescent fatalism and how this concept would manifest within the lived experiences of adolescents, hence providing the rationale for this research study. My literary investigation revealed that virtually no literature exist describing adolescent fatalism from an educational perspective. This state of affairs further informed the rationale of this inquiry and was discussed more extensively in section 1.2.3 of this chapter.

### **1.2.2 The cognitive nature of fatalism**

According to Beck's cognitive model, individuals make meaning of events and circumstances by cognitive interpretation. Their responses are formed by what they believe to be true about their own experiences (Beck, 2011, p. 31). Fatalism may consist of specific beliefs and is likely to be cognitive in nature. It may refer specifically to how individuals make meaning of their own lived experiences through interpretation. Interpreting their lived experiences may mean that they attach



specific emotional and cognitive values to a given circumstance or set of circumstances. This may, in turn evoke a specific behavioural response. Significant contributions to this discourse have been discussed in chapters two and three. The works of Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino and Pastorelli, (2003) with regard to self-efficacy and the work of Drew and Schoenberg (2011) postulating the connection between beliefs and behaviour have been extensively discussed in the literature review.

Kamper (2008) noted the connection between the beliefs of South African adolescents and their environment. This relation has been discussed in this inquiry within the theoretical framework of in terms of Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory. Much of what he suggested has to do with low levels of motivation, passive coping and disruptive behaviour among learners, which ties up very strongly with current research in the field of fatalism (Kamper, 2008, p. 1). The National Planning Minister ministry's diagnostic overview conducted in June 2011 suggested that the quality of schooling in South Africa is substandard, especially in the township schools (*Diagnostic Overview (2011)*, Available at <http://www.info.gov.za/368A0328-B6A5-4C3E-BF3C-8CF58BF7922C>). Modisaotsile (2012, pp. 1-3) has described the adverse circumstances in South African schools which may have an effect on the mind-sets of adolescent learners. Violence in schools was mentioned as a key issue. The rape of schoolchildren of both genders and sexual violence and abuse, often by educators, has been a marked feature of the schooling experience of many learners. This also pertains to sexual abuse, pregnancy and poverty. All of these factors may be influential in the drop-out rate in secondary schools (Chisholm, 2004, pp.1-22). Mgibisa (2009, In Modisaotsile, 2012, p. 2) mentioned that the South African Institute of Race Relations has also expressed concern about the high dropout rate, especially in poor black schools. The poor standards have also been exacerbated by a large number of under-qualified or unqualified educators who teach in overcrowded and ill-equipped classrooms, with severely limited resources (Modisaotsile, 2012, pp. 1-3).

The socio-cultural environment may also contribute to how fatalism manifests in individual population groups. In this regard, the contribution of Mgibisa (2009, as mentioned in Modisaotsile, 2012, p. 3), concerning the high drop-out rate of



especially black learners, may stimulate more interest in the possible variance in fatalistic thinking in specific groups in South Africa. The possible influence of the socio-cultural environment has been discussed further in Chapter two.

### **1.2.3 The research of fatalism in South African adolescent populations**

Until now, research in the field of fatalism as a cognitive mind-set among adolescents in South Africa, has been uncharted territory. Fatalism or fatalistic mind-sets has not been investigated with regard to adolescents in South Africa. During the literature review, which included the work of various researchers, I have noted that very few South African studies referred to fatalism. Comprehensive research has been done in the United States of America in connection with the effect of fatalistic thinking on youth culture (De Genova, 1995, pp. 89–132; Kubrin, 2005, pp. 433-442). Still, the overweight of literature on fatalism as a cognitive phenomenon stems from the field of medical research and not from the field of educational research.

To my mind, research placing fatalism in the centre is necessary within the South African context, seeing that it may bring some answers with regard to the diverse challenges in the field of education and mental health. In the same vein, Bray et al. (2010, p. 324) suggested that research in South Africa should find ways to stem the tide of mental defeat and fatalism that often shape the social landscape (Bray et al., 2010, p. 324). This research study is an attempt to make a contribution in this regard.

Understanding fatalism may be the first step to improve the lives of some adolescents and instil hope for the future. Comprehending the intricacies of the phenomenon may work towards preventative intervention. This would support the objectives of the Mental Health Care Act 17 of 2002 (pp. 7-8) in terms of the objective to provide community based care. Schools can be instrumental in this process in a twofold way:

Firstly, primary intervention could be done on a subject level by placing the right emphasis on Life Orientation as a subject that equips learners in a holistic way to

develop a sense of understanding the self in relation to the world. This would assist them in finding meaning in events and circumstances, being able to manage and attain a sense of control over their lives (Antonovsky, 1993, p. 725). This should positively affect hope and resilience (Weingarten, 2010, p.15) providing one with the necessary personal and social skills to counteract the force of fatalistic thinking. Secondly, the conceptualisation of fatalism in the field of educational psychology could contribute to the creation of intervention strategies by educators, counsellors and psychologists. The research aims for this inquiry were the following:

I have explored the phenomenon of fatalism in adolescents by conducting an extensive literature search and review, supported and supplemented by field research in a naturalistic environment. The concepts emerging from the literature review and the data collected from the field research were brought together to conceptualise and describe the phenomenon of fatalism in adolescents in an adequate way. Throughout the inquiry process I endeavoured to answer the following questions:

- What are the possible manifestations of fatalism in adolescents?
- How does fatalism possibly colour their lived experiences?
- How does adolescent fatalism possibly affect educational attainment in adolescents?

Subsequently I have presented the research design chosen as discussed below as the most appropriate to answer the above research questions.

### **1.3 RESEARCH PLAN**

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) highlighted five phases of the research inquiry process that I employed to structure the research plan of the study.

- I have selected and discussed the theoretical framework for this study, providing a compass to guide the research in the appropriate direction. (Merriam, 2009).

- I have introduced myself as an educator and the researcher in this study, reflecting on my double role within the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).
- I have decided on and discussed the research paradigm and design chosen for the study.
- I have discussed the chosen methodology and methods of data collection.
- I have explained the processes of data analysis and presentation, concluding with a discussion of the findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

### **1.3.1 Guiding the Inquiry: the theoretical framework**

Bandura's social cognitive learning theory informs the theoretical framework of this study. His theory attends to how people "develop social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural capabilities; how people regulate their own lives; and what motivates them" (Bandura, 2007 and Bandura & Lock, 2003 cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p. 399). His social cognitive learning theory places emphasis on cognitive factors such as expectations and beliefs and "includes thinking, believing, expecting, anticipating, self-regulating and making comparisons and judgements" (Woolfolk, 2013, p. 399). In social cognitive learning theory the notion of 'Triadic Reciprocal Causality' is of key importance (Bandura, 2002, p. 1175). This concept describes how personal, environmental and behavioural factors collaborate in the process of learning. (Woolfolk, 2013, p. 399). Woolfolk (2013, p. 442) also discussed the relationship between what learners believe about learning (epistemological beliefs) and about themselves – their competence and the causes for success and failure. The views of learners about their own ability to learn are of particular interest to this study. According to Woolfolk (2013, p. 443), beliefs about one's ability are related to other beliefs about what you can and cannot control in learning. Fatalism, as the belief that your lived experiences are determined by external factors beyond your control, may influence one's beliefs about what you cannot control. Attribution theory (Anderman and Anderman, 2010) describes how the individual's explanations, justifications and excuses influence motivation, for example, that good performance is attributed to the fact that others are either "smart," lucky, or work hard. This resonates well with Powe and Johnson's (1995) descriptions of "luck" and "predeterminism" as two of the three core dimensions of the Powe Fatalism Index.

Once one compares Powe's dimensions of fatalism (luck, pessimism and predeterminism) to the application of the attribution theory to school learning by Weiner (2010, as cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p. 444), a remarkable semblance is noted. Weiner (2010) uses the dimensions of locus (the internal or external locus of the cause of success), stability (whether the cause is stable over time and in different circumstances) and controllability (whether the person can control the cause). In terms of learning, these dimensions will inevitably lead to a specific feeling of control (or being out of control) in the individual. At this point, Beck's cognitive therapy model, and its emphasis on the causality between beliefs, feelings and behaviour, should also be introduced to the discourse.

The reciprocal relationship between beliefs and behaviour, as described by Beck, complements and enriches the discussion on social-cognitive learning theory as applicable to this study. Therefore, it is also important to include Beck's model of Cognitive Therapy into the theoretical framework of this study, as it specifically deals with "feelings" which is the result of specific "beliefs" (Beck, 2011, pp. 15-17). These theories will be more extensively discussed in chapter two.

### **1.3.2 Introduction of the researcher**

#### ***1.3.2.1 My lived experiences***

I am Life Orientation educator in the GET and FET phases in a parochial school in a more affluent part of the Western Cape Province and an ordained minister of religion. At the school, I am also employed as a school counsellor. In my field of work I deal with the emotional lives of adolescents on a daily basis. Often, while addressing a learning or behavioural problem in school, I have wondered about the underlying mind-set governing the way in which a particular learner reasons and acts. This mind-set possibly forges the world-view of the adolescent, which, in turn may impact on his/her level of motivation, self-esteem, emotional intelligence, decision-making skills, interaction with others and self-efficacy.

Living in a rural community, I, on a daily basis, come across adolescents that have disengaged from their formal education process and either lives off social grants or

are entirely dependent on their parents and grandparents for their basic needs – and often for the needs of their own children as well. In discussions with these adolescents, I have noticed a significant level of mental defeat and hopelessness as most of them consider themselves trapped in their circumstances. From their perception they cannot affect any change in their lived experience. This experience is not limited to specific socio-economic groups, but occurs in both poorer and more affluent communities, including adolescents from different demographic backgrounds.

In my interaction with my more well-off learners in the classroom, I have noticed that, in some cases, adolescent learners disengage from their own education processes by passive coping. When the challenge seems to be overwhelming, they use various methods of evasion or avoidance – to the extent of almost annihilating their own opportunity for education. These students often do not do their homework assignments, often misbehave in class, and generally seem disinterested. On closer investigation, it seems that they find learning challenging and feel overwhelmed by the academic expectations of educators. They tend to respond with a mind-set that negatively influences their level of motivation, self-belief, self-efficacy and decision-making.

Yearly a high number of learners drop out of school in the country to become part of the enormous youth unemployment statistics (Modisaotsile, 2012, pp. 1-7). As a way of finding some answers to this and the above scenarios I have decided to investigate fatalism as a phenomenon. I want to understand fatalism and how it presents in the lived experiences of adolescents in order to find a way to recognise a fatalistic mind-set in an adolescent. This will hopefully enable counsellors and educators to intervene in more relevant ways.

#### **1.3.2.2 *Who am I?***

I am fully aware of the fact that all research is interpretative and is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p.22). This is also true of my own research as pertaining to this research inquiry.

This inquiry is positioned within the interpretive paradigm, which suits my approach to this research perfectly. It provides an opportunity for me to attempt to understand the phenomenon of fatalism in adolescents. My natural tendency to look at a specific phenomenon can best be described as a multi-faceted and eclectic. In my working environment I move seamlessly between the disciplines of education, psychology and theology and I will opt for the position that fits the requirements of the situation the best. These observations will therefore always contain components of various disciplines. In a way, I believe that this is why I have developed an interest in fatalism as a research topic; it spans the width of my own lived experience and my interest in philosophy, theology and education.

### ***1.3.3 Research paradigm and design***

I have adopted the interpretivist paradigm for this inquiry. The interpretivist paradigm originates from the social sciences as it focuses on human beings and their way of interpreting and making sense of their own reality (meaning making). The interpretative paradigm has its roots in philosophy and the human sciences, particularly in history and anthropology (Holloway, 1997, p. 93; Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson & Spence, 2008, pp. 1389-1397). I have chosen the interpretive paradigm to guide the research of this study for the following reasons:

Firstly, my initial understanding of fatalism led me to believe that it could be a multi-faceted phenomenon which would require a multi-disciplinary approach, possibly branching out into the fields of psychology, philosophy and theology. Being firmly rooted in the broad field of the social sciences, the interpretive paradigm provided the superstructure for an inquiry into adolescent fatalism (Holloway, 1997, p. 93). Secondly, because the interpretive approach essentially has to do with the making of meaning, it provided the appropriate guidelines for an exploratory inquiry aimed at the understanding of a social phenomenon such as fatalism (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2004, p. 20). Thirdly, I chose the interpretive paradigm because of the socially constructed nature of the knowledge I sought to gain (Holloway, 1997, p. 93). Fatalism in adolescents is a phenomenon that is embedded in the lived experiences of people and affects the whole context of their lives. I could only hope to understand the phenomenon if I engaged with the research participants in their

own contexts. In similar vein, Holloway (1997, p. 93) argues that researchers should approach participants not as individual entities who exist in a vacuum, but within the whole context of their lives.

Further, this engagement declares me, the researcher, as the most important research instrument (Holloway, 1997, p. 93). An interpretive approach allowed for such direct involvement. I became both the conductor of the research as well as the interpreter of the research process. The relationship between the research participants and me became the environment in which the phenomenon was interpreted and in which new meaning could be constructed (Henning et al., 2004, p. 20). Lastly, I anticipated that the inquiry into adolescent fatalism would be uniquely related to the contexts and personal lived experiences of the research participants themselves. This added a measure of subjectivity to the research as the humanity of the researcher and the research participants would negate the claims of absolute truth (Henning et al., 2004, p. 20).

In terms of a research design, a qualitative exploratory design was followed. In constructing the design of the inquiry, I was guided by the concepts and structure of a hermeneutical approach, which is essentially interpretive in nature. I was specifically directed by the concepts of *Verstehen* (Weber) and the hermeneutical spiral (Heidegger).

The “insider knowledge” that was required for this exploratory study also had specific methodological implications (Henning et al., 2004, p. 20). The data collection for this inquiry had to be done in a natural setting. Therefore, I have chosen a school environment which represents a shared lived experience for all the participants. I have employed qualitative data collection methods such as creative strategies, focus group interviews, personal interviews and qualitative content analysis as a method of data analysis. I have used triangulation as a method of verification in the study by triangulating different methods of data collection (creative strategies, focus groups and individual interviews), as well as different naturalistic research environments. (Henning et al., 2004, p.103). Following an inductive approach, I could come to an understanding of the phenomenon of fatalism in adolescents, being informed by the rich experience of the research participants, as well as my own (Gubrium & Holstein,

2002, p. 68 in Henning et al., 2004, p.103). This enabled me to describe the underpinnings of fatalism in adolescents and how it possibly affected their educational attainment. The research design will be discussed in detail in chapter four.

The aim of this research design was to contribute to credible and valid research findings that would enrich educational practice, inform policy and improve the lived experiences of adolescents in South Africa.

### **1.3.4 Research Methodology**

A qualitative methodology has allowed an explorative study of adolescent fatalism, which, within the interpretive paradigm, led to a more comprehensive conceptualisation and understanding of the phenomenon. Eventually it was possible to describe the phenomenon of adolescent fatalism with an adequate amount of rigour.

#### **1.3.4.1 Methods of data collection**

I have selected five schools as naturalistic environments in which to conduct the research. The following selection criteria, which will be fully described in Chapter four, have been used in the selection of the schools: Socio-economic status as defined by the South African Department of Education (DoE): “National Qs (*quintiles* – *own cursive*) were ‘poverty rankings’ that the national DoE annually allocates to each public school. The Minister of DoE annually determines ‘national Qs’ or parts of Qs in terms of Section 39(7) of SASA (RSA 2006a: 43) and allocates them to schools. The national Qs usually range from poorest to least poor (i.e. 1 to 5) with the Q 1 schools in the poorest communities and the Q 5 schools in the least poor communities (Setoaba, 2011, p.22). This is a broad classification system and is annually reviewed and is therefore suitable only to be used as a guideline. The following research schools have been selected, broadly fitting into the categories of the National Qs:



- A rural school in an informal settlement (township) with the majority of learners with isiXhosa as home language and English as language of teaching and learning.
- A private school in the Cape metropolitan area with English as language of teaching and learning.
- A rural, dual-medium school in a more affluent community.
- A large, dual-medium school in a less affluent community.
- An Afrikaans-medium school in a semi-metropolitan area with a feeder area of mixed affluence.

I have started the data collection process by involving groups of grade 11 learners in a creative strategy phase in which they had to express “something that tells the world how you feel about life right now.” They had to design a T-shirt by drawing and writing symbols or words, explaining the content in a short paragraph. Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with different focus groups, consisting of learners from the respective participating schools as mentioned before? Hereafter learners were voluntarily asked to participate in individual interviews. An interview guide (see Table 4.3 in chapter four) has been used to direct the semi-structured focus group interviews. Klassen (et al., 2012, pp. 377-380) postulated that qualitative measures (mostly deductive) measure the universality or generality of ‘known’ phenomena and central patterns of association, including the assumptions of causality. The qualitative approach to this research has enabled me as the researcher to make meaning of the complexity of fatalism in a naturalistic environment. I have been able to work inductively with the raw data to derive specific themes and patterns which, combined with the literature review, assisted in the development of denominators that could be translated into the various dimensions of fatalism in adolescents.

## **1.4 THE INTEGRATION OF THE DATA**

In employing a qualitative methodology, the collected data has been integrated through a process of qualitative content analysis (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2004, p. 106). This consisted of a thorough analysis of the data by open and axial coding, labelling the data and bringing it together in various themes that could be arranged further into data-categories. Language and the writing of themes now became the medium of analysis. Once I have reached the stage where I believed that the themes were adequately representing the phenomenon of adolescent fatalism, I could with confidence use individual themes as the basis of arguments upon which the final discussion of the data was built.

## **1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The following ethical principles should be followed by any researcher: honesty, objectivity, carefulness, openness, respect for intellectual property, confidentiality, beneficence and non-maleficence, justice, non-discrimination, legality and competence (Resnik, 2011, p. 2).

This research inquiry was conducted in the four state schools with permission of the Western Cape Education Department and clearance from the ethical committee from Stellenbosch University. In the private school permission was granted by the principal as the representative of the board of governors.

In this research, the protection of the participants' interests and confidentiality were considered important. This was ensured by the following measures:

- Participation was voluntary and the participants were informed that non-participation would not put them at a disadvantage.
- Personal assent/consent was obtained from all participants to take part in the research.
- Parental consent was obtained for all participants under 18 years of age.

- For confidentiality purposes all interviews and questionnaires were done anonymously. A code system was used and the details are known only to the researcher. During interviews the actual names of participants were used. Access to the data has been restricted to me as researcher, and my two supervisors. Electronic data was stored safely in password protected folders on my personal computer and hard copies will be locked away safely and will only be accessible to me.
- Reference to local psychologists has been provided to participants who, as a result of taking part in the study, may need further help. Learners who did not have access to private services were offered the services of psychologists employed by the Western Cape Department of Education in the various education districts. The names and contact details of school psychologists were provided to the schools.

## **1.6 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

It is important to clarify the key concepts employed in this study in order to inform the research questions and aims.

### **1.6.1 Fatalism**

Though the word “fatalism” is commonly used to refer to an attitude of resignation in the face of some future event or events which are thought to be inevitable, philosophers usually use the word to refer to the view that we are powerless to do anything other than what we actually do (Stanford Encyclopaedia Online: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/fatalism/>)

Controversy exists over what fatalism really is. Whelan (1996 as cited in Bernard et al., 2011, p. 1) argued that fatalism’s potential range of meanings varies

from the strict sense of a system of beliefs which holds that everything has an appointed outcome which cannot be altered by effort or foreknowledge, to a sense of resignation based on the realities of a

difficult life-situation, to a more imprecise set of connotations covering cynicism towards established values of work and order.

In this inquiry I have accepted that fatalism can occur across a wide spectrum of beliefs or lived experiences which may sometimes be experienced as absolutely pre-ordained and unalterable and at other times as allowing the possibility of human agency and change. This wide definition is important because of the multiple situations in which fatalism can occur. Using a wider definition of fatalism also allowed for individual differences in experiencing a given set of circumstances.

The way in which various aspects of a specific mind-set signals fatalistic thinking, as well as the way in which specific emotions may be caused by fatalistic thinking was important to this study, especially within the focus of the theoretical framework of social cognitive learning theory and cognitive therapy.

### **1.6.2 Nihilism**

The word ‘nihilism’ is derived from the Latin word ‘nihil’, which means ‘nothing’.

“While nihilism is often discussed in terms of extreme scepticism and relativism, for most of the 20th century it has been associated with the belief that life is meaningless. Existential nihilism begins with the notion that the world is without meaning or purpose. Given this circumstance, existence itself – all action, suffering, and feeling—is ultimately senseless and empty” (Pratt, 2005, retrieved from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/nihilism/#H3>).

For the purpose of this research, ‘nihilism’ was not used in its strict philosophical sense, which means the denial of the existence of anything or, the denial of the existence of any moral values. Rather, this study followed a more pragmatic interpretation. This interpretation is built on the adolescent’s need to believe that life is worth living, but, because of his/her circumstances, has very little to believe in. This, together with anxiety and other psychosocial stressors, may deteriorate into “psychogenic nihilism” or, an all-encompassing lack of belief that renders the

individual unable to cope with reality. This also leads to a feeling that life is not worth living (Pratt, 2005, retrieved from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/nihilism/#H3>).

Nihilism may have a collective nature where it occurs in communities and societies living without hope and a positive expectation of the future. This could become a very fertile breeding ground for fatalism in the individual – the feeling of helplessness and the belief that you are unable to improve your circumstances by the modification of your own behaviour.

### **1.6.3 Formal Process of Education**

This indicates education delivered through the governmental institutions (Schools and Colleges for Further Education and Training)

### **1.6.4 High School or Secondary School**

In South Africa the term 'high school' or secondary school normally refers to an academic institution accommodating the General Education and Training phase (Grades 8 and 9, with grade 7 normally being accommodated in the Primary school) and the Further Education and Training phase (Grades 10-12).

### **1.6.5 Adolescent learners**

The term used to describe children between the ages of 11 and 19, attending school in the South African school system.

Etymology: Latin, *adolescere*, to grow up

This covers the period in development between the onset of puberty and adulthood. It usually begins between 11 and 13 years of age with the appearance of secondary sex characteristics and spans the teenage years, terminating at 18 to 20 years of age with the completion of the development of the adult form. During this period, the individual undergoes extensive physical, psychological, emotional, and personality changes (<http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/adolescence.>) The development of the adolescent will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

### **1.6.6 Western Cape Province**

One of the nine provinces of the Republic of South Africa and situated in the South Western part of the country.

### **1.6.7 Lived experiences**

In the phenomenological approach to human research, the term 'lived experiences' refers to a description of the world as we experience it without prior theory or the mandate to use taxonomical descriptions, classification or abstracting of what is described (Van Manen, 2010, pp. 2-4).

In this inquiry, I have been searching for a single term to describe the full experience of the adolescent in his/her inner and outer worlds that encompass everything he/she experiences in life. I have chosen the expression 'lived experience' for the lack of a better description and have used it in this way in this inquiry. It is not to be confused with the phenomenological understanding of the term.

## **1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

This chapter is followed by a literature review in Chapter 2, which is further expanded in Chapter 3. It provides an overview of the theoretical background and focuses on the epistemological questions ("what") as well as the etiologic questions ("how") regarding fatalism and its influence on the engagement of adolescents in the formal process of education.

In Chapter 4, the research design of the qualitative and quantitative phases is discussed. Chapter 5 will commence with the description of the data-analysis and findings. Chapter 6 concludes the research study with a discussion of the conclusions based on the results, the limitations of the study and further recommendations.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

The first chapter provides the framework for the research study. In the following sections the significance of the study in terms of the current context of education in South Africa is discussed. The research problem that informed the research, as well as the aims of the inquiry and research questions is presented, as well as the research design and methodology. The first chapter concludes with a clarification of significant concepts integral to the study and a presentation of the remaining structure of the research study. In chapters two and three, the literature review follows.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **LITERATURE REVIEW: EXPLORATION OF FATALISM AS CONSTRUCT**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of a literature review is to contextualise the research study; to argue a case and to identify a position that your own research will occupy. The literature review provides the opportunity to fuse the literature about the research topic under investigation, and to engage in a critical dialogue with previous research within the particular focus. Within, this dialogue the literature review becomes a discourse, introducing different speakers (other researchers). The literature review also provides the context in which the newly generated data is to be analysed and explained. In the eventual explanation of the research data, the literature review helps to show the significance and relevance of the research in terms of existing literature. It creates the context for the study and binds the research design, theoretical framework and the discussion of the topic together in a coherent whole (Henning et al., 2004, p. 27). The literature review enables the researcher to formulate the research problem clearly and to plan and implement the investigation efficiently. The ultimate aim is to find published research that defines the current state of knowledge in your focus area and to identify a gap in that knowledge base that your study will attempt to address (Gravetter and Forzano, 2009, p. 48).

#### **2.1.1 The impetus behind this research study**

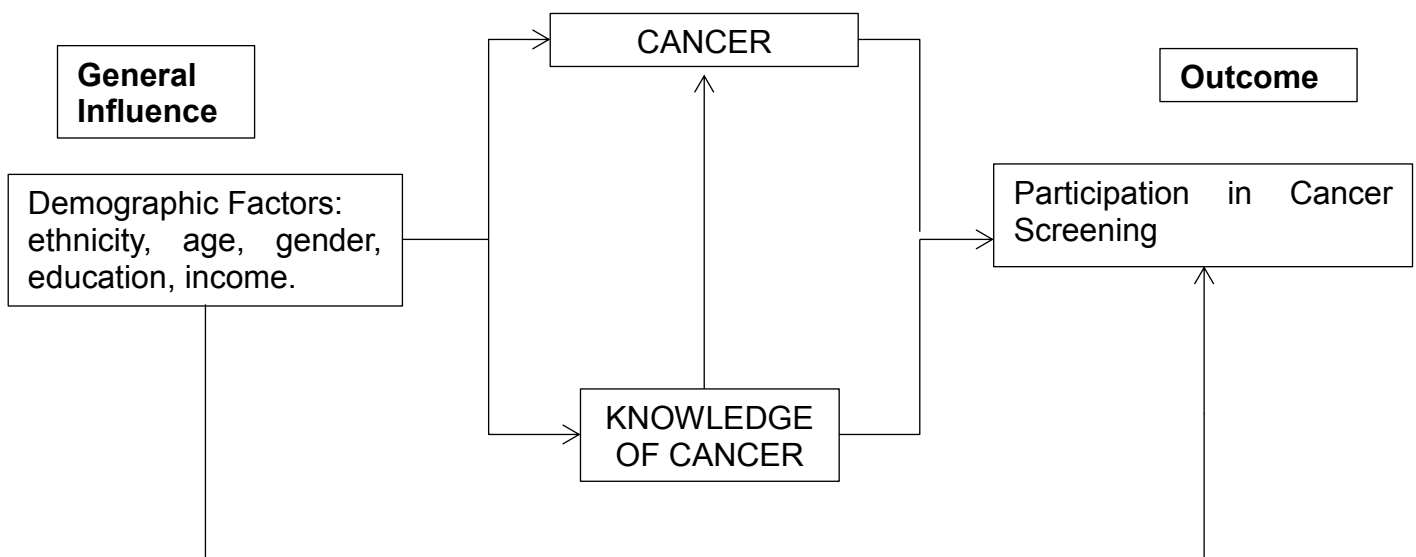
As indicated before, interest in the research topic, explored in this study, was motivated by studies investigating fatalism amongst cancer patients in the USA (Freeman, 1989; Powe, 1994; Powe and Johnson, 1995; Lannin, Mathews, Mitchell, Swanson and Swanson, and Edwards, 1998; Straughan and Seow, 1998; Steginga and Occhipinti, 2006). The results of the research were compelling enough to stimulate my interest in exploring fatalism within the context of adolescents in South African schools. I have asked myself whether fatalism could hold the key to



explaining many of the problems experienced in high school education in South Africa, such as disengagement from the educational process, as well as apathetic and violent behaviour (Chisholm, 2004, pp.1-22; Ward, 2007, as mentioned in Bray et al., 2010, p. 99; 144).

The work of Barbara D. Powe conducted with the African-American population in the USA is of particular significance. Campbell (1993) and Freeman (1989), as cited in Powe and Johnson (1995, p. 119), mentioned that cancer mortality rates among African-Americans were ever on the increase. These studies suggested that the reluctance to engage in preventative and diagnostic programmes might be rooted in the cognitive processes (decision making) of individuals. They noted the following: individual patients were only diagnosed when cancer had already reached an advanced stage. This suggested that there might have been a conscious decision not to engage with treatment programmes earlier. Powe and Johnson (1995, p. 119) indicated that African-Americans often do not take part in cancer screening despite the fact that it is a very efficient tool in the early detection of cancer. A recent predicament has been that African-Americans were the least likely population group to take part in these programmes (as cited in Blendon, Aiken, Freeman & Corey, 1992, pp. 221-235). The inquiries noted that hindrances such as poverty, lack of transportation and a lack of knowledge had played a significant part in the non-participation in cancer screening and prevention programmes. However, other significant contributors to the health decisions of African American cancer patients became known, namely cultural values and beliefs. Powe and Johnson (1995, p. 120) recognised that fatalistic beliefs among African Americans prevented them from enrolling in cancer screening programmes. The Powe Fatalism Model, presented in Figure 2.1, illustrate the way in which various factors possibly interact with regard to cancer fatalism and how it relates to the decision-making of patients to participate in cancer screening programmes. According to Powe (1995, p.1365), cognitive-perceptual factors influenced health promoting behaviours in American populations. This seemed to be especially the case where specific cognitive-perceptual beliefs about the control over one's health relate to fatalism in cancer patients. The belief that one is not in control of one's health could lead to a decrease in health-promoting behaviours, such as going for regular cancer screening. The reason is that fatalism, especially cancer fatalism, encompasses perceptions of hopelessness,

worthlessness, meaninglessness, powerlessness and social despair (West, 1993 as cited in Powe, 1995, p. 1365). Therefore, cancer patients may come to believe that they have no control over their health and, because of that, might not display behaviour that will improve their health. Powe proposed a relationship between demographic factors (ethnicity, gender, race etc.), knowledge of cancer, and the participation of patients in cancer screening as an outcome. This resulted in her postulating the Powe Fatalism Model illustrated in Figure 2.1 below.



**Figure 2.1 The Powe fatalism model (PFM)**

From Powe's arguing of fatalism as a cognitive-perceptual phenomenon or belief, the critical need to define fatalism arose, especially to understand the philosophical ideas that underpin fatalism as a cognitive phenomenon. Without a clear understanding of the phenomenon, attempts to intervene may be in vain (Powe & Johnson, 1995, p. 120). If one assesses the Powe Fatalism Model carefully, one understands that there are certain general factors, for example the demographical factors mentioned in the model in Figure 2.1 that might underpin or influence the cognitive processes in individuals and how they try to give meaning to their unique circumstances. The factors proposed by Powe were investigated and developed by other researchers, who also refined the original Powe Fatalism Index (PFI). Shen et al. (2009) refined the Powe Fatalism Index as derived from the Powe Fatalism

Model). Their contribution is discussed in some depth in section 2.2.3 of this chapter.

It is important, for the research of fatalism, to conceptualise the phenomenon adequately, before research is attempted (Shen et al, 2009, p. 2). Building on Powe's analyses and scale development endeavours, Shen et al. sought to conceptualize and build a measure for fatalism that might be applicable across a wider range of health conditions and within a broader set of cultures (Shen et al., 2009, p. 2). In order to accomplish this, they considered the various contributions made by researchers within this focus to describe the phenomenon of fatalism adequately. Shen et al. (2009, p. 3) mentioned the following contributions, spanning a wide range of descriptive linguistic concepts to the fatalism discourse: Neff and Hoppe (1993; as cited by Shen et al., 2009, p. 2) described fatalism as "passively denying personal control" while Powe and Finnie (2003, p. 454) suggested it to be "the belief that death is inevitable when a serious disease is present". Shen et al. (2009, p. 3) further mentioned that, in existing literature, the nature of fatalism encompasses one, or some combination of the following dimensions:

- (a) the individual's perceived lack of (internal) control over external events in his or her life (Chavez, Hubbell, Mishra, & Valdez, 1997; Davison, Finkel, & Smith, 1992; Neff & Hoppe, 1993; Straughan & Seow, 1998), (b) notions of fate, luck, destiny and predetermination of a disease or health condition (Cohen & Nisbett, 1998; Davison et al., 1992; Straughan & Seow, 1998), and (c) perceptions of powerlessness, hopelessness, and meaninglessness due to expectations of negative health consequences (Scheier & Bridges, 1995; Powe & Johnson, 1995).

Despite the different emphases, these scholars mostly agreed that fatalism is cognitive in nature because it constitutes of specific beliefs in the individual. Shen et al. (2009, p.3) further suggested that fatalism can be conceptualized as a set of beliefs that includes such dimensions as predetermination, pessimism, and the attribution of one's health (or lived experiences, in a broader context) to luck. This set of beliefs, as suggested by Shen et al. (2009), has informed the rest of the study. However, alternative dimensions of fatalism may have emerged during this inquiry

that should be considered in the final assessment of fatalism as a construct. I therefore retained an open approach to findings that might have confirmed, expanded, and/or contradicted the above. An important objective of this research was to establish whether or not the findings about fatalism in the medical field, could be transferred to other contexts. For this inquiry, the transferral of these findings pertains to the context of adolescents and the way in which fatalism may influence their learning, academic attainment and behaviour. A particular aim of this study was to inquire in which it may influence their ability to engage with formal education processes.

### **2.1.2 The reading of literature as a hermeneutical process**

To gain a better understanding of fatalism among adolescents, a thorough review of existing literature was required. The first objective of the literature review was to explicate the phenomenon of fatalism in adolescents, clarify the various concepts associated with it, and to gain a better understanding of the historical and present discourses about the possible manifestation of fatalism in adolescents in contemporary society. In chapter one (Section 1.2.1), I alluded to the fact that fatalism is a multi-faceted concept that spans the disciplines of theology, philosophy, sociology and psychology. Therefore, it served the purpose of this research study well to view the development of the concept within the different disciplines and explore the often contradicting statements between the various disciplines. A second tier of the literature I have reviewed had to do with adolescents, their development, their unique characteristics and their specific lived experiences in a variety of South African contexts. The latter part of the literature review is thoroughly discussed in chapter 3. I used the specific concerns of social cognitive theory, as illustrated in Figure 2.7, as a guide in the exploration of the literature.

I conducted this research study within the interpretive paradigm. This meant that every component of the research became part of an extensive hermeneutical process. This process of understanding flowed through my own lived experiences and worldview (as researcher), those of the participants in the research, and the understanding and contributions of various researchers that enlightened my own understanding and thinking (Wilcke, 2002, p.3). Reading the literature was a

continuous process of reading and interpretation on my side, embedded in a much greater flow of events and ideas.

Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson, and Spence (2008, p. 1391) noted that thinking encompassed the entire hermeneutical process and reflected one's understanding of the dialogue between oneself and "all experiences and conversations (via reading, writing, thinking and dialogue) with others." Smythe et al. (2008, p. 1391) mentioned Dunne (1993) who argued that thinking is not a 'working out' but rather a 'letting come' of ideas, often coming to us in an unrelated moment as we understand, think, wonder and question in a new way. Our thoughts are infused with our own being or identity, as well as the being or identity of those we share our lives with. It can be no other way, for our very understanding of the words we use originated from our experience, our particular "situatedness" (Heidegger, 1995; in Smythe et al., 2008, p. 1391).

Reading and interpreting what I have read became part of a hermeneutical process. This process was a critical influence on my conceptualisation of fatalism throughout the research process. I employed the hermeneutical principle in two ways: Firstly, I used the dynamics of the hermeneutical process to conceptualise and explicate fatalism as a phenomenon of adolescence, based on an overview of relevant literature in this chapter. Secondly hermeneutics served as bedrock for my interpretative research study. The place and importance of hermeneutics in terms of the research method will be fully discussed in chapter 4.

## **2.2 A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE NOTION OF FATALISM**

The word 'fatalism' is derived from the Latin *fatum*, meaning something spoken, a prophetic declaration, an oracle, a divine determination or an appointed order of the world (Cary, 2007, p. 166). The term 'fate' indicates that everything in human lives, in society and in the world itself, takes place according to a set and absolute pattern. Fatalism would then describe man's submission to fate, in resignation to an external force perceived to be in control of one's destiny.

To understand the richly textured and complex views on fatalism and its dimensions, as it emerges from a vast corpus of philosophical, theological and psychological literature, it appeared helpful to approach the conceptualisation of the phenomenon by using synopses of two eras. The synopses were based on the chronological development of important concepts related to fatalism, as well as the ways in which it was conceptualised by various philosophical and theological schools of thought. The synoptic tables (Tables 2.1 and 2.2) may be a useful guide to understand the conceptualisation of fatalism as described in section 2.2.1.

## **2.2.1 Fatalism in Theology and Philosophy**

Discussing the development of the notion of fatalism in theology is somewhat problematic, because of the diverse religious reality in history and the present time, as well as the vast time span that is implied. For the purpose of this research study, I will discuss the development of the concept in theology, which often developed concurrently with philosophical ideas from the Hellenistic period, as a precursor to the development of Christian theology and Islamic thought<sup>5</sup>. I will also refer to prevailing thought in traditional African religious philosophy

### ***2.2.1.1 Fate, fatalism, chance and necessity before the Common Era***

The synopsis given in Table 2.1 and the description that follows is an attempt to provide a bird's eye view of the historical and conceptual development of fate, fatalism and the closely associated concepts of chance, necessity and moral responsibility before the Common Era. The constraints of space do not allow a fuller exploration of all discourses in this inquiry. The synopsis may reveal that, although there are many differences in religious perspectives and the content of religions, the application of these concepts to human experiences appears to be universal in all religions.

---

<sup>5</sup> Islamic thought. Islamic thought will not be discussed separately in this inquiry, because it is so similar to Judaeo-Christian thought. The religions share the same idea of God as the all-powerful that determines the destiny of man according to his divine will and rule. The Islamic idea of fate is similar to Christian doctrines of predestination, i.e. that everything was predetermined according to the divine will (Cavendish, 1980, p. 220).

**Table 2.1: Synopsis of the notions of fate in Ancient Greek, Hindu, and Roman philosophies and religion** (Table constructed according to facts extracted from Bolle, 1987)

FATE, FATALISM, CHANCE AND NECESSITY BEFORE THE COMMON ERA	Timeline (circa)	Ancient Greek and Philosophy religion	Hinduism (Brahmanism)	Philosophy of the early and late Roman Periods
	1200		The development of the concept of karma – the notion that life is determined by previous acts. Also <i>rta</i> (balance) is controlled by Mitra and Varuna.	
	700	Hesiod's Theogony-Fate is attributed to the Moirai, the goddesses of fate. Zeus, the godhead is the creator of fate.		
	600			
	500			Incorporate Greek ideas: Belief in Tyche (chance) and Fortuna (good luck). Abandons the idea of deities determining fate. The theory of absolute chance (Tychism) or accidentalism? develops.
	400	Epicurus breaks with the idea of physical determinism. More focus on moral responsibility. Aristotle, Plato and Pythagoras develop their ideas of 'necessity' as opposed to 'chance'.		
	300			
	200	Chrysippus contradicts the idea of absolute necessity (external locus of control) and introduces moral responsibility (internal locus of control)		
	100			
	Summary of emerging concepts:	Chance: The idea that events are not predetermined but occur randomly. This concurs with a belief in "good luck" as a determining factor in life.	Necessity: An expression of the idea of determinism: The notion that everything is predetermined and nothing happens by chance. Life's events are controlled by an external locus of control.	Theological determinism: The gods determine life's outcomes.
Moral responsibility: The notion that man has the ability to decide and everything is not absolutely predetermined				

Fate before the Common Era was associated with the rule of the gods. One's fate was said to be determined by a divine being, or the representative of a divine being such as an oracle or a prophet. They determine what will inevitably happen in one's life or what one will inevitably do (Cary, 2007, p. 166). Fate and fatalism before the Common Era were conceptually the best represented in various religious traditions. Fate was seen as an independent force outside of man, controlling the outcomes of his life. This force was often personified and was seen as a physical being, often divine, that controls the lives of man. For example, Hesiod, in his *Theogony*, postulated fate as an external power in the form of the Moirai, the goddesses of fate and the dispensers of good and evil. They were seen as the descendants of the Night and of the main god, Zeus. It is a common thread throughout most ancient religions to detach this main deity from the fate in an attempt to preserve the integrity of the divine; that is to provide an explanation to the fact that negative outcomes in one's life is the work of fate and not of an unjust deity, thus the integrity of the divine stays intact (Bolle, 1987, p. 279).

In the Hindu tradition, the authorship of fate is transferred to the individual and it lies mostly within the ability of the individual to control the outcome of life events by leading a moral life. In the Vedic texts (the Upanishads), the meaning of the term *karma* is explained as the manner in which life is determined by previous acts, or acts in a previous existence – a remainder of the period of Brahmanism (from 1200 to 600 BCE). The term *ṛta* is used to describe the cosmic “truth or balance” that is guarded by the two deities Mitra and Varuna (note that, again, the acting agent is not the main deity, Brahman). However, they are only the guardians of *ṛta*, not its owners. In the Hindu tradition no deity is absolutely identical with fate (Bolle, 1987, p. 292).

In ancient Greece, during the Hellenistic period, as well as in Ancient Rome, the goddesses, Tyche and Fortuna were invoked, although their names do not seem to relate to much more than “chance,” “fortune,” and “good luck”. It seems that during this period, the concepts of “chance”, “fortune” and “good luck”, became more depersonalised. These were increasingly seen as more impersonal universal forces (Bolle, 1987, p. 292; Bobzien, 1998, pp. 175-176). “Chance” and “good luck” were indeed hypostatized by the Greek use of the word (tyche – τυχη), expressing the



theory of absolute chance or pure accidentalism (Tychism). This was similar to the personification of “chance” or “good luck” in the ancient goddesses, although the meaning of the word “tyche” was gradually no longer associated with the idea of a personal deity that controls destiny (Bobzien, 1998, pp. 175-176).<sup>6</sup>

Before the Common Era, man’s destiny was perceived to be determined by a singular factor or a combination of factors, such as the beliefs in chance, the divine and necessity. During the Hellenistic period, fate was seen as the force that determines all actions, which caused all efforts to try and affect a different outcome to be futile. (Cary, 2007, p. 160). This introduced the concept of necessity mentioned by Honderich (2005, pp. 19-29). Necessity (Latin - *necessitas*) underpins the idea of determinism. This represents the state or condition that cannot be otherwise than it is; that must be just as it is. Necessity is the principle by which the universe and all it contains are regarded as unavoidably caused by an antecedent factor. In the Pre-Socratics era, necessity was a quasi-mythical expression for the law or order of the cosmos, as in the teaching of Parmenides that the goddess at the centre of the world is called ‘necessity’. However, these thoughts were also upheld by Pythagoras in *The myth of Er*, and by Plato in *The Republic* (Part X) (Baldwin, 1911, p. 145; Audi, 1995, p.516), even before the Common Era.

It is important to remark at this point that necessity and chance were mostly portrayed as mutually exclusive. Necessity suggests a determined reality, while chance suggests a completely random influence on events, in other words, necessity is determined and linked to the causal relationship between events and phenomena, while chance is indeterminate. It was only when philosophers such as Chrysippus began to reflect on man’s ability to make moral decisions, that the notion of compatibilism<sup>7</sup> was introduced to the discourse. The term was only used in the 17<sup>th</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Charles S. Pierce, the father of the philosophical school of pragmatism (Audi, 1995, p. 565), explained the concept of tychism further. He argued the doctrine of absolute chance in the universe and postulated that its fundamental laws were not fixed. Pierce argued that the cosmos came into being as a result of evolution. Tychism was part of his evolutionary argument. He believed that, although all things came into being by undetermined and changing manifestations of chance, but became regular through natural processes of growth and development (Audi, 1995, p. 816).

<sup>7</sup>Chrysippus’ idea of moral responsibility was expanded by Thomas Hobbes (17<sup>th</sup> century) and David Hume (18<sup>th</sup> century) when they developed the notion of compatibilism. Compatibilism regards determinism and free will as logically compatible. It is constructed on the idea that, if determinism is true, each of us may nevertheless be held responsible for our actions. Moral responsibility

century by Hobbes and Hume (see footnote) (Bobzien, 1998, p. 234-235; Honderich, 2005, p. 39-44). The dimensions of fatalism before the Common Era can be conceptualised as is illustrated in Figure 2.2.



**Figure 2.2 Concepts of determinism before the Common Era**

### ***2.2.1.2 Fate, Fatalism, Determinism and Libertarianism in the Common Era: A dialectic discourse between philosophy and theology***

The conceptual development of fate and fatalism as part of the debate between the philosophical positions of libertarianism (upholding the free will) and determinism moved much faster during the Common Era. Again, I made an attempt to provide a synopsis of the development of major ideas in this regard. I separated the development of the religious determinism (predestination) from the development of the philosophical concepts determinism and libertarianism (free will) for the purpose

---

presupposes that, although determinism is true, our actions were chosen out of our own free will (Honderich, 2005, p. 39).

of clarity only. In Table 2.2, I gave a synopsis of the development of religious determinism.

**Table 2.2 The development of theological determinism (predestination or fore-ordination in the Common Era** (Facts extracted from D'Assonville, 1981, Praamsma, 1979 and Esposito, Fashing & Lewis, 2002).

Timeline (circa)	Emergent theological ideas during the Common Era
200	The patristic fathers adopt the Stoic concept of predestination and develop it into theological determinism.
400	St. Augustine formalises the idea of predestination – articulates God's good will as the power determining history. (Neo-Platonism)
600	Development of Islamic thoughts on predestination. The Qur'an supports both the ideas of divine predestination and man's ability to act voluntarily.
1200	Scholasticism: Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus postulate God as first cause of everything (Aristotelian ideas). Alters the idea of necessity by replacing it with the notion of concurrence – gives prominence to the human will as possible causal factor.
1500	Church Reform: John Calvin and Martin Luther associate universal law with the free and sovereign will of God. Reject fate or chance as determining factors. Develop the idea of concurrence between our will and God's will.
1600 - 1900	Reformed Orthodoxy (Heidegger's point of view) - expands on the idea of concurrence postulated by Calvin. God is the first cause of all things, but allows second causes to also act, however, all within his divine will.

During the Common Era, the rising and dominant force of Christianity in Europe, the Near East and North Africa, introduced another discourse, bringing about new concepts of fate and fatalism, along with new developments in philosophical ideas such as determinism and libertarianism (the concept of the free will). In this regard it is also important to mention the development of the concepts in the other monotheistic religions of Judaism and Islam. Although different in emphasis and content, the monotheistic religions drew from the same philosophical base, while accentuating their own content. The debate between determinism and free will

remains problematic in all three religions in current times (Esposito, Fashing & Lewis, 2002, p. 222). With the dominance of Christianity in Western society, the largest contribution in Western philosophy came from the side of Christian theology and philosophy.

Heyns and Jonker (1977, p. 219) postulated that there is an unsolvable bond between theology and philosophy, because contemporary theology is always practised in response to the current general and culturally determined philosophical traditions in society. This view was held by various prominent scholars such as Thomas Aquinas and others (Dugandzic, 2012, p.17, Van Ackeren, *sine die*, p. 550). Theology will always side with contemporary philosophy or distance herself from it. Karl Barth, the 20<sup>th</sup> century German theologian, indicated that the African saint, St. Augustine of Hippo was strongly influenced by the Platonic school, Martin Luther by Neo-Platonism and John Calvin by Old-Platonism. In the same vein, Thomas Aquinas was influenced by Aristotelian thought. Because theologians are working in a temporally and culturally determined milieu, they are influenced by the contemporary thought from the disciplines of philosophy, the social sciences and psychology. In other words, theology as a discipline is influenced by the *zeitgeist*<sup>8</sup> (Heyns and Jonker, 1977, p. 219). In this part of the study I attempted to briefly describe the relation between theology and philosophy and explore the dialectic discourse between these two disciplines with regard to the notion of fatalism. The discourse between theology and philosophy reached a pinnacle in the debate about the problem of the free will and in the church's theological defence of her views.

The problem of the free will pertains to the problem of the nature of free agency and how it relates to how responsible behaviour originates and exists. A central question to the notion of free will as opposed to determined will is whether humans are free in what they do or whether their lives and actions are determined by external events beyond their control (Audi, 1995, p. 280; O'Connor, 2010; Griffith, 2013, pp.19-20). Most of the discussion on the problem of the free will is concerned with the question whether man is free to choose his actions according to his own decision or whether his actions are determined by other agents or events (internal locus of control versus

---

<sup>8</sup> *Zeitgeist*. (German) The characteristic mood or quality of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas, beliefs, etc. of the time. (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 1998)

external locus of control). From a philosophical point it means that a specific event or situation determines another event or situation if it is clear that the latter is a consequence of the cause. (Audi, 1995, p. 280; O'Connor, 2010; Griffith, 2013, pp. 2-3). This is confluent with typical logical versions of determinism, which postulate that each future event is determined by what is already true. There are also theological variants of determinism which argues the predestination of all circumstances and events by a divine force, in advance, even from eternity, as they will happen according to a predetermined plan (Audi, 1995, p. 281; O'Connor, 2010; Griffith, 2013, p. 21). It will help the reader to understand that there are many variants of determinism and that these variants are embedded in causal law, which in turn, is linked to the idea of causality as expressed by Aristotle, describing a cause (Greek – *aitia*) as an explanatory factor (Cary, 2007, p.166). Causal law is a description of regular and invariant connections between types of events or conditions (states), where the connections between these events or conditions are causal. Deterministic law is one variant of causal law. Deterministic causal laws state that there are given and inalterable connections between events, in other words, the future is fixed in the way it is going to be (Griffith, 2013, p.18). This also implies that there is only one possible history for the world.

The doctrine described above is in essence *scientific determinism*, for it grounds this implication in a general fact about the natural order, namely its governance by universal law. In *theological determinism*, God (or a divine power) is the acting agent in history who determines everything that happens. Since God is assumed to have perfect knowledge about the universe, only the course of events that he knows will happen can happen (Griffith, 2013. p. 22).

There is also *logical determinism*, which grounds the necessity of the historical order on the logical truth that all propositions, including the ones about the future, are either true or false (Griffith, 2013, p.21). Fatalism, the view that there are forces that determine all outcomes independently of human efforts or wishes, is claimed by some to be a version of determinism. Others deny this on the ground that determinists do not reject the efficacy of human effort or desire; they simply believe that efforts and desires, which are sometimes effective, are themselves determined

by antecedent factors (as in a causal chain of events) (Audi, 1995, p. 281; Cary, 2007, p. 166).

The dialectic relationship between Philosophy and Theology regarding determinism warrants a study on its own, but I briefly discussed it in this research study. It is strongly associated with the chronological development of the theological variant of determinism called predestination or fore-ordination. The development of beliefs of determinism are closely related to the development of the Christian doctrine that God, as the supreme power in the universe, controls everything according to his sovereign will and according to the purpose he has set. This could be important in the context of this study as Powe and Finnie (2003, p. 456) suggested a possible relation between Christian spirituality and fatalism. The theological debate about the problem of the free will gave rise to the philosophical debate between libertarianism and determinism which was rekindled in the 18<sup>th</sup> century through the work of Hobbes and Hume and Kant and more recently, Newton, Laplace, D'Holbach, Schopenhauer and Heidegger (Audi, 1995, pp. 197).

Christian theology assimilated the ideas of Stoicism into their own scheme of thinking. The Stoics postulated the idea of divine pre-knowledge (Greek – *pronoia*), which drew very strongly on the heritage of the Greek philosophy, especially Plato's teleological and natural interpretation as argued in his *Timaios*. In *Timaios*, Plato distinguishes between three great entities – the disorderly and chaotic matter; the ideas that originated in the eternal order; and the divine craftsman, *the demiurge*, who, according to the example (paradigm) of the eternal realm of ideas (forms), creates order in the chaotic matter. According to Plato, the master craftsman (demiurge) created a specific purpose for all beings, animate and inanimate. This purpose (*telos*) becomes the guide for all actions of all beings. The divine purpose could extend beyond human activities and sensible things. The Stoics upheld that the created cosmos should be viewed as a single living organism. The cosmos is governed by its own divinely intelligent soul, all-pervasive divine Reason. This divine reason is called by the names God, Fate, or Providence (Bobzien, 1998, p. 45; Cary, 2007, p. 170). The divine reason (God) guides the cosmos purposefully towards its preordained destiny. Destiny can be seen as identical with the *heimarmene*, the impersonal power of fate that permeates everything and purposefully governs the

actions of gods and men (Durand, 1981, p. 53; Audi, 1995, p. 281, Carey, 2007, p. 170). The Stoics believed that man has freedom of choice, but can only choose what fate or destiny allows him to choose – the Chrysippus concept of compatibilism comes to mind (Bobzien, 1998, p. 234-235; Cary, 2007, p.170). This differs from the classical description of fate as the belief that, since all future actions are fated, one may just as well not pursue something, as it is beyond one's control anyhow (Cary, 2007, p. 170). These ideas of Plato and the Stoics became the foundation on which Christian and Islamic doctrine was built.

Clement of Alexandria (2<sup>nd</sup> century) was one of the first Christian philosophers to incorporate the Stoic idea of the *logos* as the controlling force or universal law within Christian doctrine. He related it to the *logos* concept in the prologue in the Gospel of John (The Gospel of John, Chapter 1:1) in which the Greek word *logos* is translated with 'Word'. He adopted the idea of the Stoics that everything in creation happens according to a predestined plan. He replaced the idea of the *heimarmene*, the impersonal power of fate, with the personified Logos of John. The order and harmony of things now has a personal origin in God. Plato's idea of the world of forms or ideas that serves as a template for everything in the sensory world was largely retained. In later Platonism, the eternal ideas (forms) were linked with the mind of the divine craftsman himself. It was no longer a law above the *demiurge*, but belonging to his essence (Durand, 1981, p. 55; Cary. 2007, p.171-172). In other words, God created everything and steers everything towards his divine purpose. He is seen as not being subjected to any other power that may exist.

The Greek and Latin church fathers (The patristic fathers such as Athanasius and Irenaeus), believed the following about pre-determinism or predestination (theological determinism) and their views strongly influenced Christian doctrine on these matters. They believed that God (the Logos), provided for the cosmos through the divine maintenance of order and harmony in creation. This divine order linked with the thought that this order was present archetypically and eternally in the mind of God. Everything will therefore happen as God has ordained it. Athanasius expressed the same thoughts in his *Contra Gentes*, as did the patristic father, Irenaeus (Durand, 1981, p. 55-56). The Platonic notion that the material world was created according to a fixed and unchangeable pattern of forms and ideas, which



was re-coined by the patristic fathers into the concept of an order of archetypes in the mind of God, was finally formulated by Augustine and became a fixed component of medieval theology. Augustine followed the path of his predecessors, but he articulated the relation between God's all-powerful good will and human history more clearly. According to Augustine, God's sovereignty did not only rule over natural events, but also over history. God does not only *know* things in advance, he also *determines* them in advance (predestination or fore-ordination). Augustine clearly reflected the ideas of Neo-Platonism in his view on predestination (Durand, 1981, p. 56-58).

During the period of Scholasticism, Thomas Aquinas took the Neo-Platonic ideas of Augustine further and merged them with the Aristotelian concept of causality. He supported the notion of a fixed pattern of ideas in the mind of God, but further suggested that the existence and survival of objects in the physical world is determined by how they participate in the ideas in the mind of God (the doctrine of concurrence) (Cary, 2007, p.174-175). The other grandmaster of Scholasticism, Duns Scotus (Baldwin, 1911, p. 390; Cary, 2007, p.176), argued that the sovereign will of God, which is not determined by any preceding order or scheme, is the final cause of everything that happens on earth. This sets him apart from the Neo-Platonic ideas of the church fathers (Durand, 1981, p.62-63; Baldwin, 1911, p. 390).

The Church reformation (circa 1517, CE) affirmed the contribution of the church fathers and the scholastics to the discourse. In the Pre-Christian era, the ideas of determinism reflected the philosophical notion that everything is controlled either by fate, personified or de-personified or by universal law. In his *Institution of the Christian Religion* (Book III, chapter 23, section 2), John Calvin (1550) postulated the reformist idea of predeterminism or fore-ordination. Christian theology hereby regarded the universal law as identical with the sovereign and creative will of God as the controlling agent in the universe. Although free to act as he pleases, God does not act lawlessly (*ex lex*), but is controlled by his own righteousness. He does not protect a given eternal order by his involvement in history, but regards all orders to be subordinate to the divine purpose (Durand, 1981, p. 64-65). John Calvin firmly rejected any notion of any universal force or fate as being responsible for the outcomes of man's lived experience other than God (Calvin, 1550, Book III, Ch. 23,



Section 2). Fate or chance, as a supreme force in the universe, was no longer reconcilable with the Christian concept of God. Initially, the religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, which all share a common connection to the Biblical Old Testament and the Abrahamic history rejected every semblance of a fate that could be ascertained apart from God. Later a more compatibilist stance was adopted. During the period of the Renaissance and the subsequent protestant reformation, the idea of fate or chance as supreme forces was dismissed by John Calvin and Martin Luther. John Calvin (*Institution of the Christian Faith*, Vol. 3, as cited in Bolle, 1987, p. 294) refuted the idea of fate or chance in his explanation of man's ultimate destiny as God's decision in his doctrine of predestination, which should not be seen as synonymous with determinism (Bolle, 1987, p. 294). Luther rejected the claims of astrology regarding the stars as a determining factor in the fate of man (Tischreden, Vol. 3; as cited in Bolle, 1987, p. 294). Christian predestination is based on Augustine and Thomas Aquinas's idea of concurrence, in which the human will concurs with the divine in the outcome of events (Durand, 1981, p.59), whereas determinism assumes an absolute external locus of control. At this point it is important to note that, although there are dissimilarities between the Christian doctrine of predestination and the philosophical 'determinism', both concepts suggest that man's lived experience, to a greater or lesser degree, is determined by external forces, albeit natural law or God.

These ideas prevailed in Christian theology with various nuances until the current era, rejecting the concept of fate and ascribing all events in nature and history to the sovereign governance of God. In the Reformed Orthodoxy which spans the time gap between the Orthodoxy and the modern era, the notion was postulated, among others, by Heidegger, that God rules the world by divine decree. He denied, however that these decrees are a blue print that exists almost independently from God that he only has to execute. Everything that happens in the world happens because God willed it (Durand, 1981, p. 68).

What becomes evident in classical philosophy and in Christian philosophy is that the concept of determinism exists as the idea that man is not in control of nature or history, but controlled by either fate or God, as an external locus of control. Although the relation of God to the world and to man has been argued more often from the

standpoint of theology than that of philosophy, the argument essentially belongs in the philosophical field; that is all theological ideas involve philosophical presuppositions.

### **2.2.1.3 The philosophical development of the concepts of libertarianism and determinism**

The first prominent feature of the notion of determinism is its ubiquity. It occurs in varying forms in different religious and philosophical ideas, but with similar implications. We find it in the Hindu and Buddhist doctrines of *reincarnation* (the passing of the soul after death into another animate body), in Plato, in the Stoics, in the Alexandrian school; among the Pharisees (Judaism) and the Essenes (an early Christian sect) and in Islamic thought. The Islamic position however suggests that the Quran provided evidence for both the positions of the free will, as well as determinism (Esposito et al., 2002, p. 221). Among Christians, it is formalised into theological dogma by Augustine, who treated it almost entirely as a theological concept. After Augustine, the discourse was taken up by the scholastic doctors, especially Thomas Aquinas, who attempted to find a philosophical basis for Augustine's conclusions by means of the doctrine of 'concurrency'. Here the idea of 'necessity' is altered, as far as man is regarded, by giving prominence to the human will as the immediate cause of action. In post-Reformation times, the theological aspect of the doctrine once more ousted the philosophical, and the ideas propagated by Augustine were continued in the work of John Calvin. This theological interest dominated until the present time (Bolle, 1987, p. 292-297; Durand, 1981, p. 68).

The problem of the free will on the one hand, and determinism on the other, remains one of the strong discourses in philosophy, theology and the sciences. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward it became a debate largely waged by the exponents of libertarianism (free will) and those who advocated determinism. Others tried to accommodate both arguments and developed the notions of compatibilism or soft determinism (Audi, 1995, p. 197-199, 281).

Various kinds of determinism exist. *Logical determinism* declares each future event to be determined by what is already true (Griffith, 2013, p. 21) *Theological*

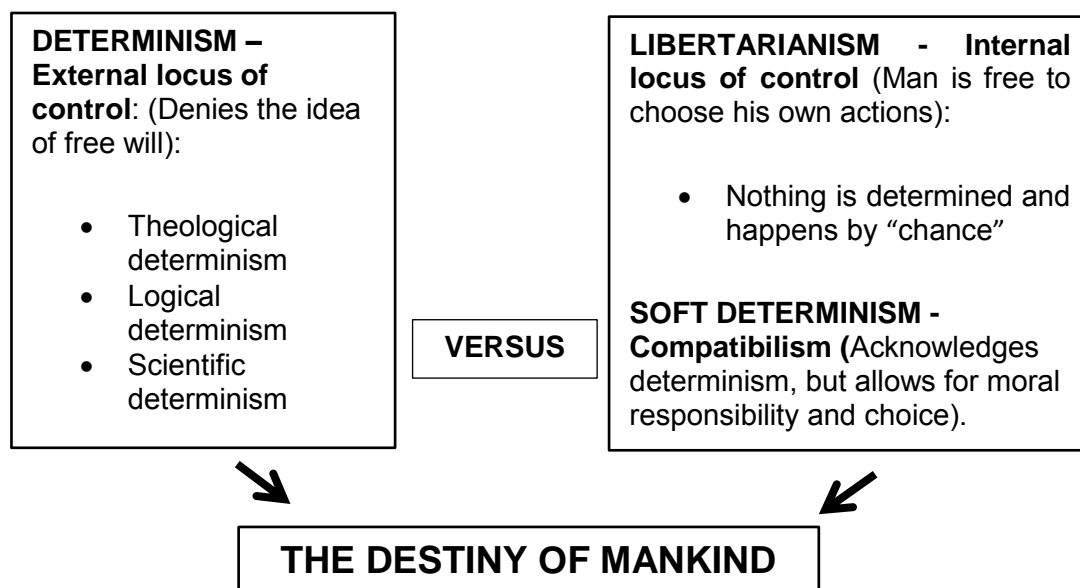
*determinism* accepts the predestination of all circumstances and events inasmuch as a divine being knows in advance (or even from eternity) that they will occur (Audi, 1995, p. 281; Griffith, 2013, p. 22). *Scientific determinism* is the view that whatever happens in the future is determined in a very specific way by that which already exists. Therefore, with knowledge of the positions of things and the natural forces that influence them, an intelligence could predict the future state of the world with absolute precision (Audi, 1995, p. 198). This view was advanced by Laplace, the father of the theory of probability (Bishop, 2005, p. 2) in the nineteenth century in the wake of Newton's success with integrating our physical knowledge of the world into a rigidly determined scientific system. In the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Isaac Newton put forward his theory of a mechanical universe – a view of nature as a universal system of mathematical reason and order, divinely created and administered (Audi, 1995, p. 530; Bishop, 2005, p. 4). Newton's religious views were in essence theistic as he deviated from the traditional Christian thinking about God by not recognising the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in its classical sense (Jones, 2011, p. 61-62). He still believed though that a divine soul was in control of a carefully planned universe. The point of view exercised by the hard determinists such as Paul D' Holbach was entirely different. D'Holbach argued that, freedom is an illusion, since behaviour is caused (brought about) by environmental and genetic factors (Audi, 1995, p. 530; LeBuffe & d' Holbach, 2010, p. 2). Some hard determinists also denied the existence of moral responsibility, and of course, free will.

The point of view of *compatibilism* or *soft determinism* also needs some consideration. Soft determinists often defined an instance of "free will" as one in which the agent had freedom to act. That is, the agent was not coerced or restrained (Martin & Sugarman, in Atmanschpacher & Bishop 2002, pp. 413-415). In a more modern expression of the soft determinism of Thomas Hobbes, Arthur Schopenhauer famously said "Man can do what he wills but he cannot will what he wills". In other words, although an agent may often be free to act according to a motive, the nature of that motive is determined. Martin and Sugarman (in Atmanschpacher & Bishop, 2002, pp. 414-415) mentioned, in connection with human behaviour, a kind of self-determinism that is not entirely determined by antecedent conditions, events or factors. In other words, the individual may sometimes act

completely voluntarily without the action being determined by antecedent conditions, events or factors. Accordingly, the viewpoint of compatibilism accepts that the universe is determined and that human agents have free will. These statements can be true together.

At the opposite extreme of hard determinism, *metaphysical libertarianism* emphasized that people are free and responsible and, *a fortiori*, that the past does not determine a unique future – a position that some find enhanced by recent developments in especially the field of quantum physics (Audi, 1995, p. 281). It is important to note that hard determinism excludes the possibilities of chance and free will entirely.

In conclusion of the argument, during the Common Era, a variety of interpretations of destiny came to the fore that may be portrayed in a very broad scheme. This suggested that the outcomes of one's life is determined by external factors, which may include the divine (theological determinism), logical determinism (causality) and scientific determinism (including internal factors such as genetics or external factors such as natural laws). In contrast to the various ideas of determinism, was the notion of the free will, or the ability of man to choose his own actions (libertarianism). These developments are graphically illustrated in Figure 2.3.



**Figure 2.3 Concepts of determinism of the Common Era**

At this point of the literature review it is important to also clarify the relationship between the belief in chance or good luck and free will. The belief in chance is often seen as similar to the belief in good luck. These two notions coincide as they both represent the idea that the outcomes of circumstances and events are random and not caused in any way. Darke and Freedman (1997, p. 486) noted that “some individuals maintain an irrational view of luck as a somewhat stable force that tends to influence events in their own favour, while others seem to hold the more rational belief that luck is random and unreliable”. Although chance and luck seem to be separate notions, it is almost impossible to distinguish between them in meaning and consequence. The ancient belief in chance or luck, as random factors, evolved into the more recent argument of the free will – the idea that we are really free to choose our own actions without any form of determination (Dennet, 1984, pp. 91-99). The common factor between chance, luck and freedom seem to be randomness (Griffith, 2013, pp.105-106). Absolute libertarianism accepts that we are totally autonomous in our decision-making. This relates to the “randomness” of chance and luck as it is also seen as indeterminate. There are, however, several philosophical objections against the close association made between free will and chance/luck. This complex concurrence is still under much discussion in philosophy (Griffith, 2013, p. 105-106). In my own mind, free will has more to do with our autonomy to make decisions, while chance or luck expresses a broader idea of the indeterminate nature of conditions and events. Free will also implies an internal locus of control, while chance or luck implies no control at all – just a random occurrence of events and circumstances. Darke and Freedman (1997, p. 407) made the interesting observation that people who believe in luck tend to view good luck as a stable, internal attribute which they possess (internal). Others who do not believe in luck instead maintain the rational view that it is external and unreliable. It seems clear that free will is always seen as an internal attribute, while chance or luck can be seen as either being internally possessed or something external.

#### ***2.2.1.4 The relationship between free will and external locus of control***

Stroessner and Green (2001) investigated the relation between the notions of free will and external locus of control. Their research (2001) may help to explain the concepts of determinism and the the belief in free will (libertarianism) further. In

1986 they conducted a study among a student population at a Midwestern liberal arts college that was affiliated with a mainline Protestant denomination. The large majority of the students identified themselves as Protestants (Stroessner and Green, 2001, p. 792).

Stroessner and Green (2001, p. 791) referred to the work of Waldman, Viney, Bell, Bennett and Hess (1983) who hypothesised that determinists would have a more external locus of control than libertarians. They found only a small correlation between belief in determinism and external locus of control, suggesting that external locus of control was not directly related to determinism while internal locus of control could not be equated with a belief in free will. It seemed as if both the belief in free will and the belief in determinism and the attitudes it brought about were more complex than generally understood. This complexity made the underlying relationships difficult to identify or understand. Waldman et al (1983) indicated that beliefs in free will or determinism could possibly vary between individuals and test populations, depending on the uniqueness of the belief systems of the participants (Stroessner and Green, 2001, p. 791).

In support of the above, Stroessner and Green (2001, p. 791) described the belief in determinism as multi-dimensional that should be viewed in relationship with other beliefs. They quoted, as example, the fact that behavioural psychologists and fundamentalist Christians may both score high in terms of their belief in determinism, but it is unlikely that their beliefs in other matters would be the same. It is therefore important to understand that belief with regards to free will and determinism may present with different sets of dimensions. Stroessner and Green (2001, p. 271) distinguished between psychosocial determinism (the fact that environmental factors determine our behaviour) and religious-philosophical determinism (the fact that a force such as God or fate acts to control our behaviour). These distinctions are consistent with the distinctions of logical determinism, theological determinism and scientific determinism which were already described in this chapter.

Stroessner and Green (2001, p. 271) therefore did not view libertarianism (the belief in free will) as the opposite of determinism, but suggested that it is a belief in its own right. This opinion is supported by the research of Luidens and Nemeth (1987, pp.

450-464) whose survey of members of the Reformed Churches in America yielded similar results. This means that the in the mind of a libertarian, the belief in determinism may not be absolutely absent. This research suggests that the belief in free will and the belief in determinism should not be seen as opposites of the same continuum, but should rather be placed on separate continuums that might be represented as follows:

No belief in free will \_\_\_\_\_ Belief in Free will

No belief in determinism \_\_\_\_\_ Belief in determinism

Stroessner and Green (2001, p. 792) tested four hypotheses of which two are of importance for this research study. Their first hypothesis was as follows: Belief in psychosocial determinism, religious-determinism, and libertarianism emerge from a factor analysis as separate and distinct constructs. The free will-determinism scale that was used confirmed their prediction as the three factors of psychosocial determinism, religious-philosophical determinism, and libertarianism did emerge from a factor analysis as separate and distinct constructs (Stroessner and Green, 2001, p. 794). This confirmed the hypothesis that the belief in determinism is not one-dimensional. Various manifestations of beliefs in determinism may exist, besides the two identified by Stroessner and Green (psychosocial and religious-philosophical determinism).

Libertarianism was also proposed as a separate construct that does not imply the absence of determinism in individuals. Research by Viney, Waldman and Barchilon (1982, pp. 939-950) and Waldman, Viney, Bell, Bennett and Hess (1983, p. 631-634) suggested that people may sometimes believe that some aspects of their lives are determined, while they have the ability to exercise free will in other areas. Stroessner and Green (2001, p.797) emphasised the importance of viewing these factors as separate constructs, especially when the relationship between belief in free will or determinism and other variables are examined.

The fourth hypothesis tested by Stroessner and Green (2001, pp. 797-798) was the following:

Libertarians have an internal locus of control. Their belief in freedom of choice contributes to a sense that they can control their lives. Psychosocial determinists are more external than libertarians because of their belief in the importance of environmental forces. Religious-philosophical determinists are even more external than psychosocial determinists because they assign a personality to external forces and believe in a plan or purpose for themselves in the future. Reliance on these forces may lead them to have an external locus of control (Stroessner and Green (2001, pp. 797-798).

The testing of the fourth hypothesis revealed that religious-philosophical determinists have a higher external locus of control scores than psychosocial determinists because of their belief that the external forces that control their lives have a plan or a purpose. Apparently, they perceived such a plan to be quite personal (almost as a blue print for their lives) which caused them to have a more external locus of control (Stroessner and Green (2001, p. 798). These findings may have an important consequence for the way in which fatalism may be present in the lives of religious-philosophical determinists. They may accept certain circumstances or events more readily as “divine ordination” and may not react with strong self-agency in such situations.

#### ***2.2.1.5 Determinism in traditional African religious philosophy***

Because this research study is conducted in the South African social context and across a culturally diverse sample, the notion of determinism in African religious philosophy also has to be investigated. The seminal work of John S. Mbiti (1989) in this regard is of great help in understanding the concepts of African religion.

Mbiti (1989, p.12-15) postulated that religion in itself is difficult to define and is even more so in the diverse religious landscape of Africa. It is difficult to speak of one traditional African religious philosophy, because there are as many variants as there are cultures in Africa, each with its own religious interpretation of life and the divine. To complicate matters further, a widespread syncretistic fusion of traditional African religion, Christianity, Islam and Judaism also exists. After all is considered, one can



argue that some concepts are widespread and, because of their common occurrence, may be helpful towards exploring traditional African religions.

Within traditional African life, the individual is seen as immersed in religious participation, which starts before birth and continues after death. It means that man lives in a religious universe. The world, and practically all activities and objects in it, are seen and experienced through a religious understanding and meaning, for example: names of people have religious meanings, rocks and boulders, rivers and streams are not just inanimate objects; all carry religious meaning. The sound of the African drum speaks a religious language. Each action and life event is filled with religious meaning. For Africans, the whole of existence is a religious phenomenon (Mbiti, 1989, p.15; Ekeke, 2011, p. 1).

African religion has its own ontology which Mbiti (1989, p. 16) classified into five categories:

- God as the ultimate explanation of the genesis and sustenance of all men and all things.
- The spirit-world, which consists of extra-human beings and of the spirits of men who died long ago.
- Man, which includes all human beings who are alive and those to be born.
- Animals, plants, and the remainder of biological life.
- Phenomena and objects without biological life.

This is in essence an anthropocentric ontology and each category presupposes the other and cannot be separated without disturbing the order of things. In addition to the five categories, there seems to be a force, a power of energy permeating the whole universe. God is acknowledged as the source and the ultimate controller of this force, but the spirits also have access to parts of it. Only a few human beings have the ability to manipulate this force such as medicine men, witches, shamans, priests and rainmakers. Some employ the force for the good and others for the ill of their communities (Mbiti, 1989, p. 16, Ekeke, 2011, pp. 8-10). It is important to note that the notion of an external force that controls and determines the destiny of man is also prevalent in traditional African religions.

When referring to religious concepts in African philosophy, one needs to realise that cardinal beliefs are vastly different from the central religious concepts in Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Religious concepts belonging to the latter groups can often not be traced back to the concepts of traditional African religions (Mbiti, 1989, p. 30; Ekeke, 2011, pp. 3). God is generally viewed as transcendent, beyond all spiritual things. He is also supreme in power and knowledge (Mbiti, 1989, p. 33). In the South African Zulu context, God is understood as self-existent and pre-eminent. One of the Zulu names for God describes him as “He who is himself,” or, “He who came of himself into being” (Mbiti, 1989, p.34; Ekeke, 2011, pp. 3). A number of African peoples consider God to have a will, which governs the universe and the fortunes of mankind. When the Bamvuti Pygmies fail to kill game in their hunting expeditions, they take their failure to be the will of God against which they can do nothing. African cultures believe that God creates and destroys. He is the giver of life and death. He controls calamities and natural disasters like disease, plagues, droughts, famine and floods at his behest. God’s will is perceived to be immutable and man generally has to invoke it or accept it in situations that seem to be beyond human power and control (Mbiti, 1989, p.37; Ekeke, 2011, pp. 8). Over the whole of Africa, creation is the most widely acknowledged work of God (Mbiti, 1989 p. 39). God never ceases to create things. In creating he has ordained the destiny of all things, especially that of man. The Yoruba people believe that God grants every man a fixed predetermined life span. Similar notions of predestination are also found among the Southern African Tswana people, the Yao and several others (Mbiti, 1989, p.40). Mbiti is very clear about the fact that traditional African religion tends to view God, the spirits-world and the shamans, medicine men and witches to determine the outcomes and destiny of the lives of people. In the light of the above one may assume that African religion and philosophy in general supports the view of divine determination, which is consistent with the general Christian view. However, man has the ability to make moral decisions within the determined reality.

## **2.2.2 The classical theorists: Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim**

The classical theorists, Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim developed contrasting and competing, but oftentimes complementary theories of social order and human essence. Lukes (1967, as cited in Acevedo, 2005, p. 75) remarked that Durkheim

sided with Freud and Hobbes. Hobbes postulated in his social theory that, where there is a large group of people living together, a common power must be set up to enforce the rules of society. He strongly advocated external control over people to prevent them from reverting to their natural state, in which they live in continuous fear and are in danger of violent death. Man, living in his natural state, becomes solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and his life, short. According to Hobbes, education and training save people from their natural state and allow them to act out of genuinely moral motives (Audi, 1995, p. 333). Marx, on the contrary, sided with Rousseau and the Utopians (Acevedo, 2005, p. 75). Rousseau held a much more positive view of man's natural ability to develop himself and advocated a free society, in which the principle of control would not be legalistic. Communal good, by and for the citizens, would act as an internal locus of control (Audi, 1995, p. 698). Besides the social theorists' strongly developed criticism on the rise of capitalism, they developed abstract, yet socially grounded conceptions of human nature, which might be helpful in informing this research study.

Both Marx and Durkheim responded to the social reality created by the industrial revolution and the rise of capitalism. They argued that the social reality was such that the individual person in society has become a pawn of labour and industry, thus losing much of his or her decision-making capacity. What someone will do for a living was no longer determined by aptitude or choice, but by the capitalist force at large in society. According to Marx, a person, in his or her free state of being, would be able to find fulfilment and joy in a lifestyle and way of living that was his or hers by choice. According to Marx, the rise of capitalism has enslaved people and alienated them from their labour (Acevedo, 2005, pp. 77-79).

Lukes (1967, as cited in Acevedo, 2005, p. 79) argued that Karl Marx "characterised alienation as a cognitive state that occurs in response to the inequitable interactions that take place within the dehumanising constraints of the capitalist labour process." Lukes (1967; as cited in Acevedo, 2005, p. 79) noted four aspects of alienation that are consistent with Marx's intended usage of the term:

- (1) The product of labour becomes an alien object which dominate the worker, (2) the act of production becomes external to the worker and is not

part of his or her nature, (3) the alienation of man from himself as a “species being”, that is from ‘his own active function and his life being, and (4) social relations have not become relations between individual and individual, but between worker and capitalist (Lukes, 1967, p. 137).

The alienation of the individual from the social structures and processes seem to occur because people think that what they are doing is not their choice and that their lives are determined by entities outside themselves over which they have no control. Lukes (1967, p. 138) argued that individuals in society are psychologically deprived of the capacity to will their own destinies, and as such are compelled by external forces to fill positions in the social order that are not of their choice. Lukes has shown how Marx identified alienation as a correlate of powerlessness. He argued that concept of ‘powerlessness’ is a useful concept to describe a predictable pathological cognitive state, caused by the level of external control exercised over the individual” (Lukes, 1967, p. 138). In my own opinion, this notion of powerlessness may directly lead to the cognitive state that I have described as fatalism.

While Karl Marx argued that it is because of the over-regulation of society that the individual develops a fatalistic mind-set, Emile Durkheim reasoned that a lack of regulation might lead to anomie, which could also result in a fatalistic mind-set, because of the lack of boundaries. In his work, *Suicide*, Durkheim describes anomic suicide as the binary opposite of fatalistic suicide (Durkheim, 1968, as cited in Acevedo, 2005, p. 77). Durkheim held that anomic suicide could take place in a situation where the individual is absolutely free, while fatalistic suicide is associated with an environment in which the individual is absolutely constrained. Both Marx and Durkheim agreed that alienation might be a common denominator of both fatalism and anomie (anomie – living without laws or moral constraints) (Acevedo, 2005, p. 78). When someone perceives his/her own life being controlled by external forces, one may become alienated from one’s own lived experiences. This may lead to the development of a fatalistic mind-set and either result in withdrawal from one’s own lived experience (passive coping), or, in some cases, to an anomic mind-set which could affect engagement in high-risk behaviour.

### 2.2.3 The contribution from the health sciences

The Powe Fatalism Index needed further refinement in its explanation and criteria of the phenomenon, ‘fatalism’. In this regard, the work of Shen et al (2009) was valuable. They expanded on the work done by Powe and Finnie (2003), positioning fatalism as a determining factor for individual behaviour in a much wider range of medical conditions. Shen et al.’s (2009) interest were sparked by the fact that fatalistic beliefs are seen to be related to lower intentions to change individual behaviour. They mentioned several studies which argued that the lack of behavioural change, attributed to fatalistic thinking, can result in a variety of negative health outcomes regarding cancer (Powe & Finnie, 2003), cardiovascular diseases (Urizar & Sears, 2006), diabetes (Egede & Bonadonna, 2003), coping with extreme stress (Yeh, Inman, Kim, & Okubo, 2006; Zimrin, 1986); coping with HIV/AIDS risks (Varga, 2001), smoking attitudes and behaviour (Schnoll et al., 2002; Unger et al., 2002), lower social function (Urizar & Sears, 2006), suicidal behaviour (Roberts et al., 1998), quality of life among HIV-infected women (Sowell et al., 1997), attitude toward safety and accident prevention (Rundmo & Hale, 2003), and unsafe sex practices (et al., 1997). A further stimulus for the research in the medical field, as mentioned above, is the fact that low income and minority populations were found to be disproportionately fatalistic. Also, fatalism in these populations seemed to be related to health disparities between these communities and more affluent majorities (Powe & Johnson, 1995; Mechanic, 2002). Shen et al. (2009, p. 2) therefore postulated that, “reducing or eliminating one’s fatalistic beliefs not only might help increase likelihood of behavioural change, but also has the potential to reduce health disparities.”

The extensive work of Powe (1994; 1995) and Powe and Johnson (1995) has already been mentioned. In an article called *Cancer Fatalism: The State of the Science*, Powe and Finnie (2003) attempted to summarise the most important findings in the medical field in terms of cancer fatalism. Cancer fatalism—the belief that death is inevitable when cancer is present— was identified as a barrier to participation in cancer screening, detection, and treatment. In a comprehensive and systematic literature review, they addressed the following topics: the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of cancer fatalism; relationships among demographic

factors, cancer fatalism, and cancer screening; the role of cancer fatalism for patients diagnosed with cancer; and intervention strategies (Powe and Finnie, 2003, p. 454.) Powe and Finnie first discussed the outcomes of a number of studies in the USA among cancer patients, especially among the African American population. The first study mentioned was conducted in 1980 and was a landmark study sponsored by the American Cancer Society and conducted by an African-American-owned evaluation group called EVAXX Inc. This study was critical in documenting the view of “cancer as a death sentence” among the 750 African Americans who took part in the study. This study further highlighted many of the glaring disparities between African Americans and Caucasians with regard to cancer knowledge and health behaviours (Powe and Finnie, 2003, p. 455).

Freeman’s design of the Poverty-Cancer spiral (1989; as cited in Powe and Finnie, 2003, p. 455) suggested that race and poverty may be important determining factors in cancer fatalism. The introduction of poverty and demography as key concepts was valuable to the research discourse. Freeman’s identification of fatalism as a barrier to cancer care, signifying a specific mind-set (fatalism) which resulted in specific behaviour (non-participation in cancer prevention behaviour), is elucidating and valuable to the research discourse about fatalism.

Powe and Finnie (2003, p. 455) further mentioned three research studies which pertinently tried to identify possible philosophical and theoretical underpinnings for cancer fatalism. These were the Poverty-Cancer spiral (Freeman, 1989); the philosophical perspectives of cancer fatalism among African Americans offered by Powe and Johnson (1995); and the work by Straughan and Seow (1998). Firstly, Freeman (1989) proposed that poverty was a prism through which perceptions of fatalism could be viewed. He argued that factors like a lack of education, sub-standard housing, lack of access to health care, amongst many other factors, may play a role in the way in which cancer patients responded to suggested prevention outcomes. Because these patients were mostly just surviving on a day-to-day basis, they were unlikely to respond to activities promoting and maintaining their health. By the time the patients were admitted to treatment programmes, the cancer was already too far advanced to do anything and yield poor treatment outcomes (p.455).

Secondly, Powe and Finnie (2003, p. 455) mentions the inquiry of Powe and Johnson (1995) in which they explored the philosophical underpinnings of fatalism in African American populations and identified angst and nihilism as two factors that may contribute to shape the presence of fatalism. Powe and Johnson (1995) mentioned existential angst and nihilism as the reflections of the cultural nucleus that reflect the prevailing social, political, economic and spiritual ethos of the times. Fatalism in society can be observed by looking at the way in which social realities such as poverty, racism, discrimination, unemployment, and inadequate access to care are related. The interrelationships among these forces represent, to a large extent, the total lived experiences of many African Americans.

Therefore, cancer fatalism, as viewed by Powe and Johnson (1995), is a situational manifestation of fatalism in which individuals may feel powerless in the face of cancer and may view a diagnosis of cancer as a struggle against insurmountable odds. The antecedents of cancer fatalism within this philosophical view are defined as fear, inevitability of death, pessimism, and predetermination Powe and Finnie (2003, p. 455).

The important findings that emerged from this study by Powe and Johnson (1995) were firstly, the identification of angst and nihilism as shaping agents of fatalism as indicated above, and secondly, the identification of cancer fatalism as a situational manifestation of fatalism. This implies that the various factors contributing to cancer fatalism, may also contribute to fatalistic thinking in other situations. Powe and Finnie (2003, p. 456) made another important observation regarding cancer fatalism that might also apply to fatalism as manifested in other situations: Cancer fatalism is not an all-or-none phenomenon. In fact, perceptions of cancer fatalism [and probably fatalism in other situations as well] are believed to develop over time and may occur along a continuum. This may indicate that where low levels of fatalism are present, behaviour might not be affected as adversely as when high levels of fatalism prevail. The placement of fatalism on a continuum may be important in the understanding of the phenomenon and the behavioural influences resulting from it.

Straughan and Seow (1998) conducted the third study mentioned by Powe and Finnie (2003, p. 455). This study made further important contributions to the



discussion on fatalism. Firstly, they postulated that fatalism is not irrational as others have argued, but may be absolutely rational. The women in their sample group made a rational decision not to go for breast cancer screening, because they sincerely believed that screening is not beneficial to decreasing their risk or mortality for cancer. Secondly, they defined *fatalism* as a belief that some health issues are beyond human control on the basis of certain views about luck, fate, predestination, and destiny. Straughan and Seow's definition introduced the notion of an external locus of control and the role of spirituality in fatalism (Powe and Finnie, 2003, p. 456). The definition of fatalism as a belief (a cognitive concept) based on the grounds of four common factors (luck, fate, predestination and destiny) may prove valuable in the course of this research study.

Additionally Powe and Finnie (2003, pp. 458-459) summarised the results of various studies exploring the relation between demographics and cancer screening in various populations in the United States. Six separate studies were listed by them. In discussing the findings of these studies the purpose of the study, the population, the theoretical definition of fatalism and the findings regarding fatalism will be underscored.

In the first study Straughan and Seow (1998) investigated a sample of Chinese women with a mean age of 58.4, no formal education and a median household income of \$2250. The purpose of the study was to derive a conceptual understanding of fatalism, tool development and to evaluate fatalism as a predictor of health screening for breast and cervical cancer. The theoretical definition of fatalism employed was the belief that health issues are beyond human control. The result indicated that those Chinese women, who were widowed, with less education, older, with lower household income, with older children, with no regular doctor and no close friend with who to discuss cancer were significantly more fatalistic (Powe and Finnie, 2003, p. 458).

In a second study, Facione, Miaskowski, Dodd and Paul (2002) studied a group of Caucasian, African American and Latina women with a mean age of 46.59 to assess the likelihood that asymptomatic women will delay treatment, as well as the role of fatalism in breast cancer patients. The majority attended or completed college and



they had a mean annual income of lower than \$20,000. No specific definition of fatalism was used. The following results were obtained. Latina women had significantly higher fatalism scores than African American or Caucasian women. They also found that women who were likely to delay cancer treatment had significantly higher fatalism scores (Powe and Finnie, 2003, p. 458).

The third study was that of Mayo, Ureda and Parker conducted in 2001. They studied a group of African American women with a mean age of 70, a mean education of less than 8 years while their income was not reported. They examined the relationship between fatalism and participation in breast cancer screening. Their theoretical definition of fatalism referred to the belief that if cancer is present, death is inevitable (Powe, 1995). Significant positive associations between fatalism, age, race, doctor recommendation, education and noncompliance with mammography (in univariate analysis only) were found (Powe and Finnie, 2003, p. 458).

A fourth study was conducted by Conrad, Brown, and Conrad in 1996. They studied an African American and Caucasian group in which the majority was women with a mean age of 54 years with their income and education not reported. The purpose of this study was to assess demographic factors, health practices and to quantify fatalism. The theoretical definition of fatalism employed was the belief that one's actions cannot influence outcome, and, that cancer was a punishment for wrongdoings. The results indicated that fatalism was prevalent among African American women, the poor and the less educated and played a role in breast cancer screening (Powe and Finnie, 2003, p. 458).

In the fifth study Powe (1995) studied a group of which the majority was African American women with a mean age of 76 years, a mean education of 8 years and an annual income of lower than \$10,000. The study was done to examine the relationship between cancer fatalism, demographic variables and participation in faecal occult blood testing (FOBT). The theoretical definition used was the belief that death is inevitable when cancer is present. The result indicated that African American women, respondents with a lower education and a lower income were associated with higher cancer fatalism, while fatalism was the only predictor for participation in FOBT (Powe and Finnie, 2003. p. 458).

In the last study by Powe (1997) a group with the majority African American women with a mean age of 76.5 years, a mean education of 7.7 years and a mean income of \$7,300 were examined. The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between cancer fatalism and spirituality. The theoretical definition used was the belief that death is inevitable when cancer is present. The result indicated that high levels of spirituality were not significantly related to the level of cancer fatalism (Powe and Finnie, 2003. p. 458).

Powe and Finnie (2003, p. 485) felt that the studies that were reviewed were inconsistent in their discussion of an explicit conceptual or theoretical framework. They did, however, find that there were several common factors that appeared to shape the emergence of cancer fatalism and could also relate to other forms of fatalism. These were the following:

- Poverty, in its relation to cancer fatalism (Freeman, 1989).
- The influence of the unique historical and cultural lived experiences of African Americans on cancer fatalism (Powe and Johnson, 1995).
- External locus of control as a viable factor in the development of cancer fatalism as explicated by Straughan and Seow (1998).

From the literature review in this research study as discussed above, the following key concepts have emerged as being somehow related to fatalism, either in a causal manner or as an explanation of various underpinnings of the concept. In the first place it seemed as if various religious and philosophical perceptions, such as determinism, predestination or fore-ordination and chance could act as important contributors to the conceptual development of fatalism. Secondly, fatalism could be viewed as a personal belief, with the outcomes of one's life determined by external factors that cannot be controlled by the individual. External locus of control, or the perception that a force outside oneself controls the outcomes of one's life, seems to be a prominent dimension of fatalism. In the third place, it seems as if the demographical factors of poverty, ethnicity, age, education and social status can be significant determining factors. Fourthly, the zeitgeist that prevails in society and the associated concepts of nihilism and angst seems to provide the context in which fatalism can develop.

## 2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

What I have gleaned from the literature review, has contributed to my knowledge and understanding of fatalism as a theoretical concept which developed over time and across different disciplines. The larger hermeneutical process that drove this inquiry, and which will be discussed in chapter 4, will be complemented by the understanding of the concept of fatalism that the participants contributed, and the meaning that I could glean from their thoughts.

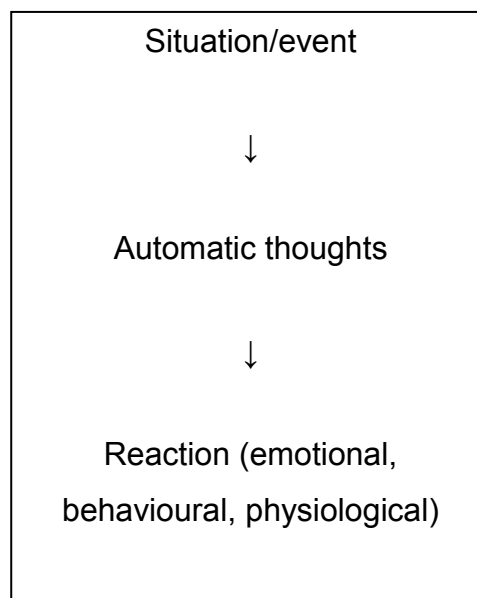
I have chosen a theoretical framework that, in my own opinion, will support what I have already learnt from the literature review – that fatalism is predominantly cognitive in nature. This does not imply that other attributes of the phenomenon will not be important. Fatalism appears to be an intricate phenomenon, related to a wide variety of dimensions that might eventually play a role in or influence how it manifests. However, Powe (1995) and Powe and Johnson (1995) described fatalism, in the case of their research, as cognitive in nature. In support, Lukes, (1967, p138) mentioned Karl Marx's view that powerlessness is a powerful construct to describe a pathological cognitive state that is caused by an external locus of control. It would thus seem as though different approaches have recognised the cognitive nature of the phenomenon of fatalism. This assumption rested on how cognitive perceptions were found to be directly related to fatalism and that cognitive perceptions, such as "hopelessness, worthlessness, meaninglessness and powerlessness" (West, 1993 as cited in Powe, 1995, p.1356), and alienating philosophies can influence decision-making and behaviour of patients (Powe, 1995, p.1356) and also of societies in general. Powe built a strong argument for fatalism as a cognitive concept that influences the behaviour of individuals. Her argument also directed the idea that gave impetus to this inquiry - that fatalism is a cognitive mind-set that may potentially influence the lives of adolescents.

Fatalism seems to manifest in cognitive content such as thoughts, assumptions, perceptions and 'truths' with ensuing emotions and behaviours. In light of the above assumption, cognitive learning theory provides an informative background in which to frame this research study. I turned to Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory as well as Aaron Beck's cognitive model, which can combine to form a theoretical

framework for bringing further understanding of the concept of fatalism in adolescents.

### 2.3.1 Beck's cognitive model

Beck's cognitive model hypothesises that people's higher psychological functions, emotions and behaviours are influenced by their perception of events and not by the events in and of itself (Beck, 2011, p. 30). The way in which people feel emotionally is related to the way in which they understand or interpret a given set of circumstances or events, as well as how they think about the situation. This leads to a specific emotional response in return that is linked to the way in which they thought about or interpreted the situation (Beck, 2011, p. 31). Beck's cognitive model is represented in Figure. 2.4.



**Figure 2.4 Beck's cognitive model** (Beck, 2011, p. 30)

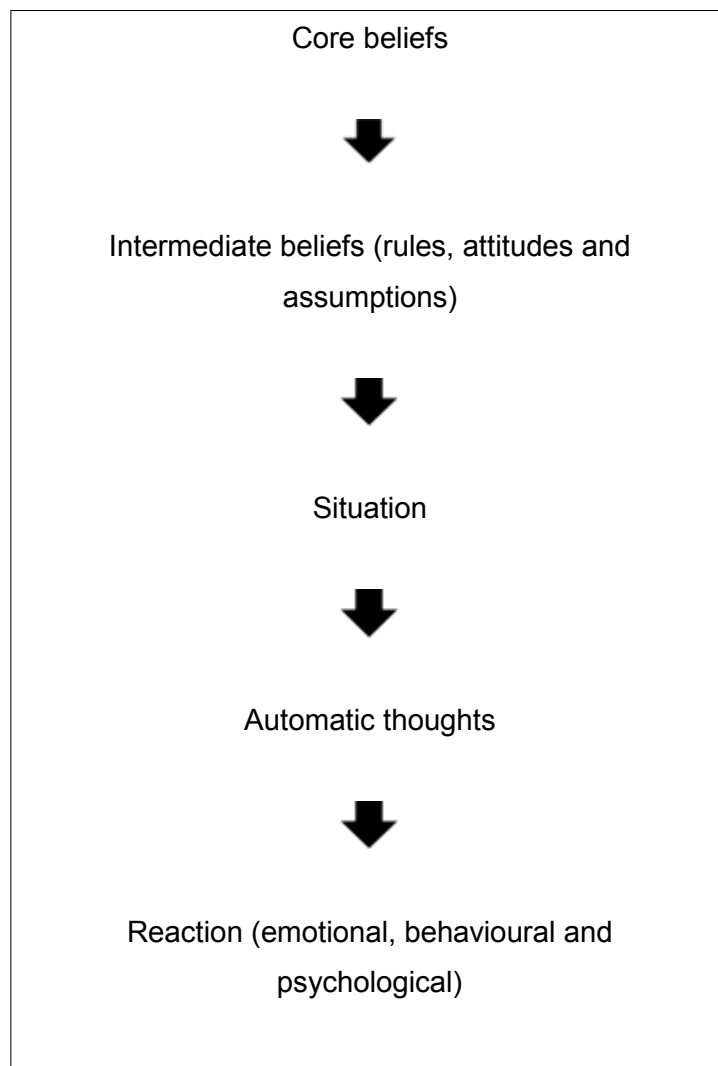
The dynamics of the cognitive model can be described as follows: When one assesses a given situation or event, a part of one's focus is on making sense of the information or stimuli in an effort to understand and integrate the information. Simultaneously, but on another level, one may be having quick evaluative thoughts, which Beck calls automatic thoughts. These thoughts can be very fleeting and rapid and one may not even be conscious of them. What one would

be aware of is the emotion that arises from the way that one interprets the situations or event or the behaviour that follows (Beck, 2011, p. 31).

Beck (1987; as cited in Beck 2011, p. 32) argued that these automatic thoughts originate from specific sets of beliefs people develop from childhood about themselves, others and the world. These beliefs are very deeply rooted in thought processes, so deep that one does not even articulate it to oneself. These beliefs function axiomatically as fundamental truths about how things “are” (Beck, 2011, p. 32). These “core beliefs” influence a second tier of beliefs that Beck calls “intermediate beliefs”. Intermediate beliefs consist of sets of different attitudes, rules and assumptions that are employed to make sense of one’s lived experience. Such beliefs can also be described as discourses. Discourses may emanate from popular culture, religious upbringings or philosophies which govern and/or influence societies, and may differ according to the zeitgeist. These discourses may represent specific beliefs which will vary between individuals.

From the literature reviewed during this study, it became evident that fatalism, because of its cognitive nature, rests upon specific beliefs held by individuals. These beliefs influence the way in which they act upon stimuli from the environment and other people. In the medical research done by Powe (1995) and Shen et al. (2009) it was found that specific beliefs about determinism, good luck and religion significantly influenced the decision making of individuals concerning their own health. The beliefs underpinning fatalism may slot into the category of intermediate beliefs in certain circumstances, or into the category of core beliefs in other. If one projects the cognitive model and its consequences onto the phenomenon of fatalism, it may yield a greater understanding of adolescent behaviour and decision-making (the particular concern of this study). Fatalism, therefore, could have an influence on how learners respond to education and learning, because it may influence their thought and decision-making responses. Drew and Schoenberg (2011, p. 3) argued that there is an “intuitive and well-documented connection between beliefs and behaviour”, supporting the notion of the cognitive model. The cognitive model formed the foundation upon which Beck (1964) built his method of cognitive behaviour therapy. To elucidate the relation between behaviour and automatic thoughts, he

postulated a specific order of cognition, which he called the hierarchy of cognition (Beck, 2011, p. 36). This is illustrated in Figure 2.5.



**Figure 2.5 Beck's hierarchy of cognition** (Beck, 2011, p. 36)

### **2.3.2 The hierarchy of cognition from a hermeneutical perspective**

During my own interpretive reading of the literature, I gradually identified a possible similarity between Beck's hierarchy of cognition, and Heidegger's hermeneutical circle (Jervolino, 1990, p. 23). The semblance that struck me was the cyclic nature of both concepts that pertain to understanding and meaning-making. For a further

explanation of the semblance between the cognitive model and hermeneutics, I refer the reader to the explanation of the hermeneutical spiral I have explained in Chapter 4. There I explained the process of understanding as consisting of four hermeneutical levels or tiers. The first level refers to the process of *verstehen* as the self-awareness of the researcher in relation to the research process and participants. The second tier refers to *verstehen* as the conceptualisation of the phenomenon. The third tier alludes to *verstehen* as the researcher's understanding of his departure into and progress in meaning making. The fourth tier refers to *verstehen* as the research participants' understanding of their own lived experiences during the research process.

The reader should note that I have employed a hermeneutical process both from the perspective of the researcher, as well as from the perspectives of the research participants. The complete hermeneutical process is explained in detail in Chapter four (Section 4.2.2.1) and a graphic presentation of the process can be found in chapter four, Figure 4.1. There I proposed that the fourth hermeneutical tier, *verstehen*, as the research participant's understanding of his/her own lived experiences, can become a guiding influence in the greater process of understanding and meaning-making in this study. In engaging with the research questions, an internal process of meaning-making regarding fatalism, and what it means to his/her lived experience, may be activated in the participant. As I understand it, this would then constitute an internal hermeneutical process on the part of the adolescent that runs concurrently with the larger hermeneutical process in the mind of the researcher. This led me to infer that fatalism in the adolescent can be configured as an internal hermeneutical process, integrating the process of the interpretation and evaluation of a situation/event in terms of one's core beliefs and how it may manifest in specific behaviour that can be associated with a particular belief or set of beliefs.

In the light of the above, I understand the phenomenon of fatalism as a cognitive concept linked with the hermeneutical processes in one's own mind, or, pertaining to this research inquiry, also the minds of the individual research participants. The perceived reality or lived experiences of the individual is the total of past and present experiences that have been formed since birth and shape one's core beliefs (Beck,

2011, p. 32). Existing core beliefs, at any given point, shape one's intermediate beliefs, which evoke specific automatic thoughts, as part of the cognitive process (Beck, 2011, pp. 35-36). Cognition takes place when perceived reality and lived experience is interpreted through the lenses of the core and intermediate beliefs, and meaning is attached to the perceived reality (Beck, 2011, pp. 36-40). This meaning could be influential in one's emotional, behavioural and psychological responses. Because this process is cyclic and not linear, it is also continuous, as the emotional, behavioural and psychological responses may possibly influence the perceived reality or lived experience in the future.

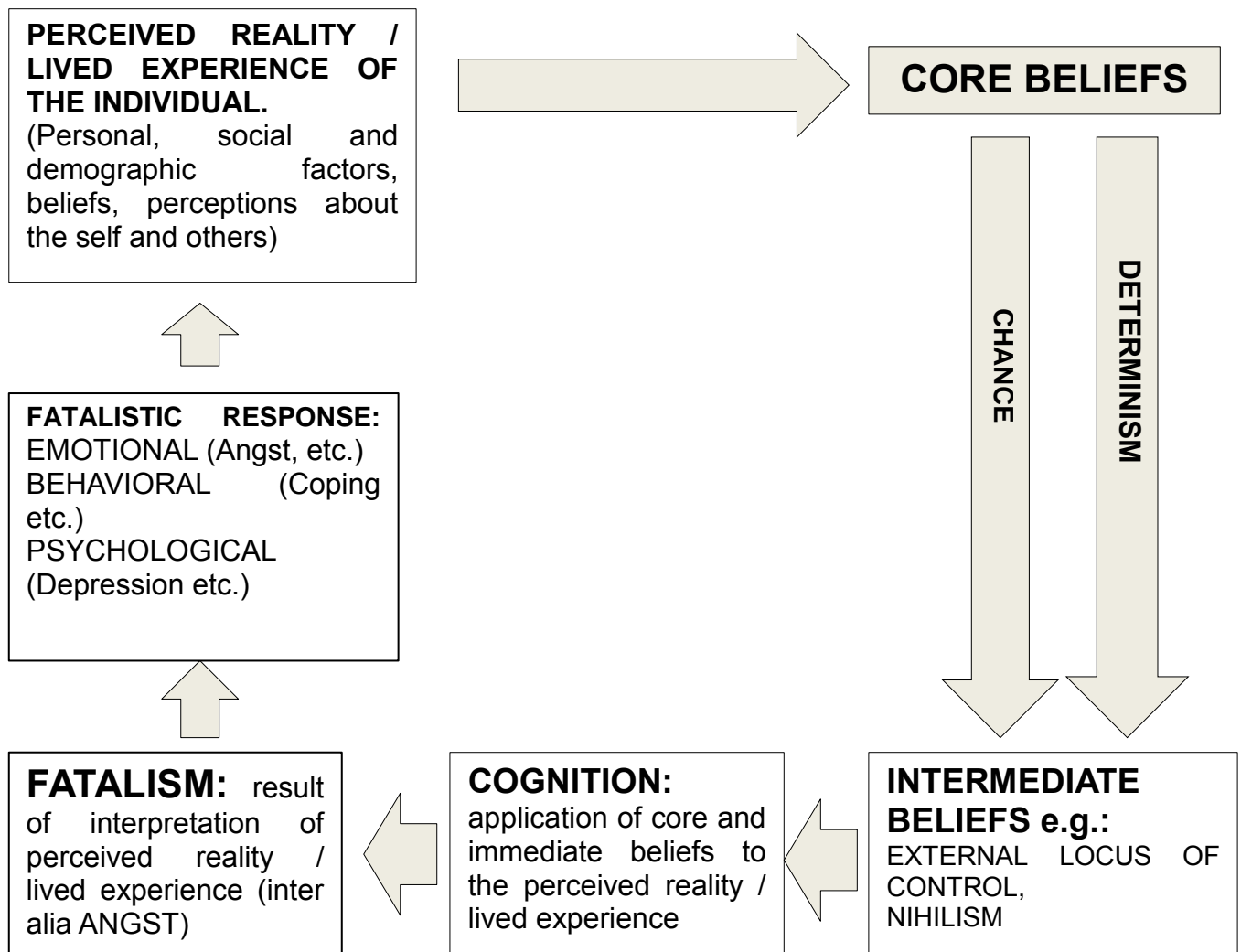
The literature review revealed that fatalism hinges on two principal core beliefs: the belief about the role of free will (with the associated concepts of internal locus of control, chance or luck) in one's life, and determinism (all the variants with the associated concepts of external locus of control). These two beliefs underpin other beliefs, for example, beliefs related to specific attitudes such as nihilism (Powe & Johnson, 1995, pp. 120-121). These integrated beliefs may be classified as either core or intermediate beliefs that may cause fatalistic thinking in the mind of the individual. In the light of the content of such beliefs, emphasising either free will or determinism, a specific meaning is created. This meaning has to do with one's beliefs of agency and inefficacy to affect a positive or desired outcome. Beliefs that carry this type of meaning could be described as fatalistic beliefs. Fatalistic beliefs, in turn, may result in specific emotional, behavioural and psychological responses. These fatalistic responses co-create a new perceived reality and lived experiences, re-shaping and building on past core beliefs. New lived experiences, viewed through the lens of new or altered beliefs, initiate the whole process once again. This begins a whole new cycle of meaning making or hermeneutical circle. The hermeneutical circle can also be seen as a hermeneutical spiral, because of the continuous process of meaning making by interpretation and re-interpretation.

My own effort to arrive at a tentative definition of fatalism, led to an understanding that fatalism may be the result of the way in which an individual perceives his/her lived experience through the lenses of his/her own belief system, based on specific core and intermediate beliefs. These core and intermediate beliefs may then be applied to his/perception of his/her lived experiences through a cognitive process in



order to make meaning out of a given set of circumstances or events. Fatalism may exist when the meaning attached to a given set of circumstances or events indicates that, in a person's own mind, he/she cannot affect any change or positive outcome by his/her own effort, because of the perception that an external locus (or loci) of control exists.

Figure 2.6 should be interpreted against this background. The perceived reality or lived experience of the individual consists of various personal, social and demographic factors, including a set of beliefs about the self and others. This may lead to the employment of specific core beliefs (e.g. the belief in chance and/or determinism), which in turn may cause a person to employ more articulated beliefs such as the belief in an external locus of control or a nihilistic attitude. These intermediate beliefs could now be used to interpret or give meaning to one's own lived experience through various cognitive processes. An individual may at this point begin to view his own lived experience from a fatalistic perspective. This, in turn, may trigger fatalistic emotive responses like angst, behavioural responses like inadequate coping and psychological responses like depression.



**Figure 2.6 A hermeneutical model of fatalism**

### 2.3.3 Cognitive learning theory

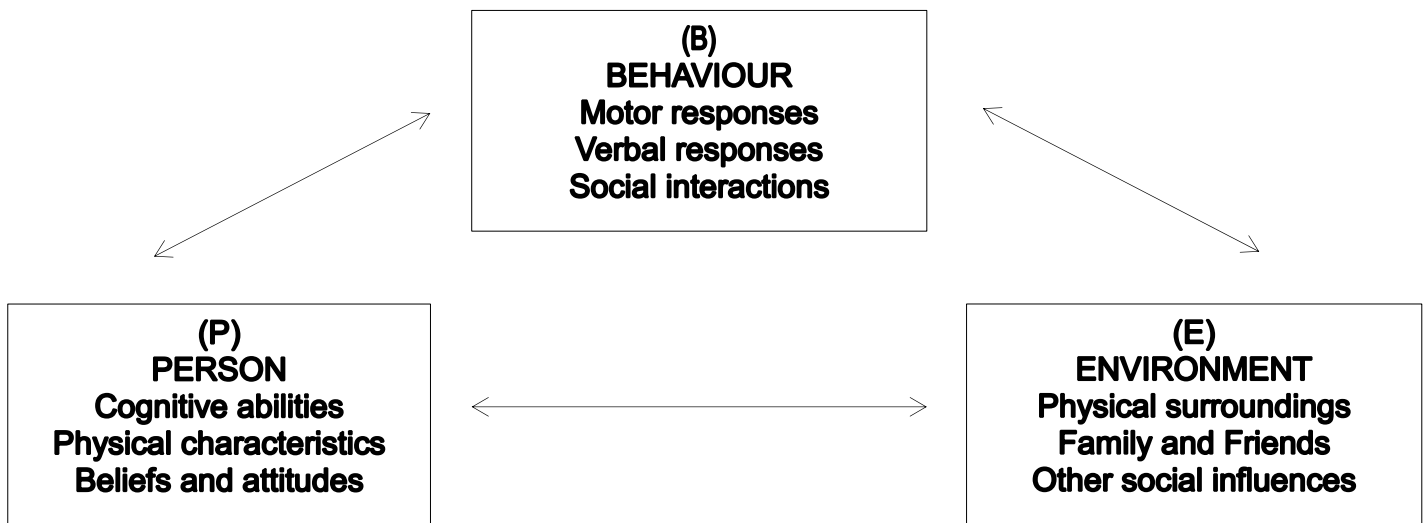
Aware of the possible cognitive nature of fatalism, I also explored cognitive learning theory in an effort to deepen my insight into the concept.

A forerunner to Bandura's social cognitive learning theory was the behaviourism of John B. Watson (1913). Watson proposed a different route from the psychoanalytical school (Freud), and argued that a person's development is reliant on internal factors such as repressed unconscious sexual motives and instincts. Watson's behaviouristic approach proposed that conclusions of human development

should rather be based on observations of overt behaviour rather than on speculations about unconscious motives or cognitive processes that are unobservable. He argued that well-learned associations between external stimuli and observable responses (habits) are the building blocks of human development. Development is not a matter of biological maturation, as Freud has argued, but rather a continuous process of behavioural change that is moulded by a person's unique environment, and may differ radically from person to person (Shaffer, 1999, pp. 42-48).

Skinner (1953) can be described as a radical behaviourist. Based on his extensive animal studies, he postulated that learning is based on operant learning, a theory that suggests that learning takes place through a process of either reinforcement, which strengthens specific behaviour, and punishment, which discourages specific behaviour. Like Watson, Skinner believed that habits develop because of unique operant learning experiences (Shaffer, 1999, pp. 48).

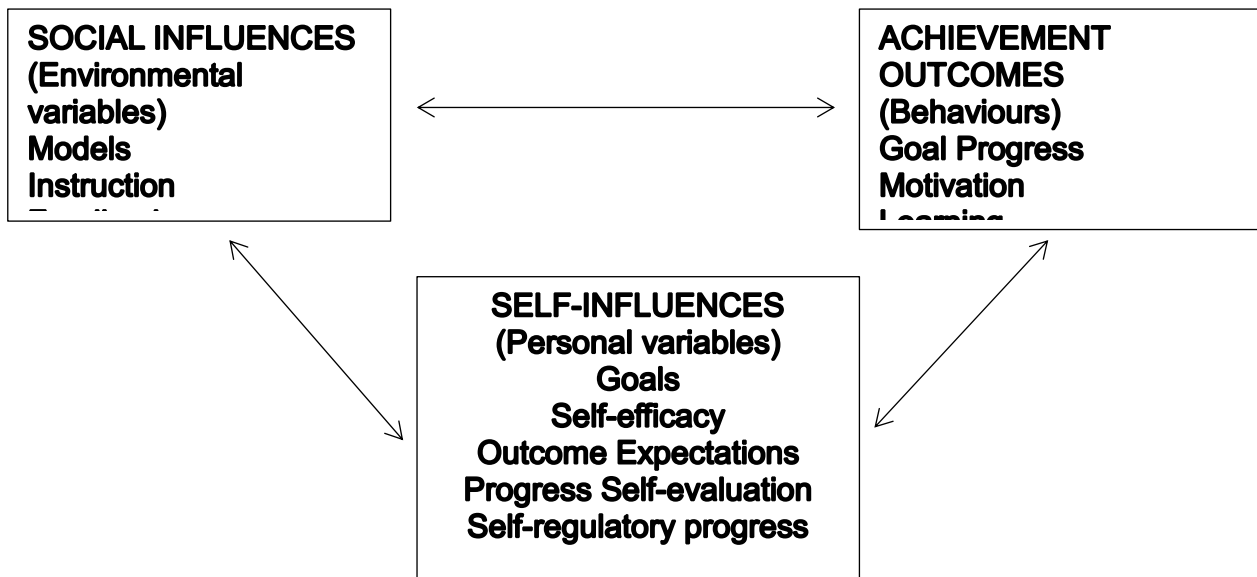
Albert Bandura (1977, 1986, and 1992) agreed with Skinner that operant conditioning is an important type of learning. He however found the classical behaviourist theories too limiting because it was based on operant learning in animals. He upheld the fact that humans are cognitive beings and could not accept that "language, mores, familial customs and practices; occupational competencies; and educational, religious and political practices were gradually shaped in each new member by rewarding and punishing consequences of their trial-and-error performances" (Bandura, 2007, p. 55, as cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p.399). In the development of his social cognitive learning theory, Bandura (1986, as cited in Shaffer, 1999, p. 50-51) proposed the concept of reciprocal determinism (Figure 2.8), a significant expansion and contradiction of Watson's theory of environmental determinism that viewed children as the passive recipients of environmental influence. Bandura proposed the concept of reciprocal determinism to describe his view that human development reflects an interaction among an "active person" (P) the person's behaviour (B), and the environment (E). Bandura therefore differed from them by postulating that links among persons, behaviours and environments are bidirectional (indicated by the arrows in Figure 2.7), for example, a child can influence his environment through his own conduct (Shaffer, 1999, pp. 50-51).



**Figure 2.7 Bandura's model of reciprocal determinism (triadic reciprocal causation)**

The social cognitive theory is a dynamic system that emphasises the role of other people serving as models and educators (the social part – social interactions [B] and other social influences from the environment [E]). It also includes thinking, believing, expecting, anticipating, self-regulating, and making comparisons and judgements (the cognitive part – [P]). The theory explains how people develop social, emotional, cognitive and behavioural capabilities. It puts forward how people regulate their own lives, and what motivates them. Gradually, Bandura's explanations of learning focused more on cognitive factors such as expectations and beliefs, in addition to the influence of models. (Bandura, 2007 as cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p.399).

Woolfolk (2013, p. 399) further explicated Bandura's social cognitive theory and described a specific cognitive system that she named the relationship of *triadic reciprocal causality* (Figure 2.8).



**Figure 2.8 Triadic reciprocal causality**

This suggests the dynamic relationship between personal, environmental and social influences. Social influences are environmental variables that include models, instruction and feedback. Self-influences are personal variables, including goals, self-efficacy, outcome-expectations, attributions, progress and self-evaluation and self-regulatory progress. Achievement outcomes refer to behaviours that have to do with goal progress, motivation and learning (Woolfolk, 2013, p.399).

“Two key elements of the social cognitive theory are observational learning and self-efficacy” (Woolfolk, 2013, p.400). Both these elements can be related to fatalism. West (1993; as cited in Powe & Johnson, 1995 p. 123) suggested that, where fatalism occurs in a very specific cultural context, observed behaviour might be tantamount to fatalistic thoughts in the individual. In other words, the specific characteristics of the cultural environment – amongst other things, the behaviour displayed by individuals, might influence a child’s behaviour and responses to his or her immediate environment. Fatalism, as the cognitive culmination of the intermediate beliefs of external locus of control and

determinism, may therefore have resulted from observed behaviour in significant others. Suffice to say, what the child observes as the responses of other individuals to the environment might, through the process of modelling, be assimilated into his or her understanding of the environment.

It is equally important to view the concept of self-efficacy against the classical definition of fatalism: “Fatalism is a sense of helplessness that a person may feel with regard to proactively modifying his/her future” (Bernard et al., 2011, p. 3). Helplessness also relates to the feeling of ‘powerlessness’ described by West (1993 as cited in Powe, 1995, p. 1365) and mentioned in Lukes’ discussion of Marx’s idea (Lukes 1967, p. 138). This has shaped my own understanding of fatalism as the belief that one has no control over the outcomes of one’s life as it is determined by forces outside of one’s control. This perception may influence one’s ability to affect any future solutions or positive outcomes to a current situation or event in one’s life.

These notions of helplessness and powerlessness tie up with the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is described by Bandura (1994, p. 71) as “peoples’ beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives.” It would suggest that someone with a fatalistic mind-set would not have the agency to pursue self-efficacy in creating a positive outcome. The body of literature about fatalism further suggests that fatalism can be conceptualised as a set of beliefs which is an aspect of the cognition of a person (also identified as such by Bandura). These beliefs may have a profound effect on behaviour. They can be based on a variety of factors, which may be part of a very complex psychosocial landscape. From the literature reviewed, it seems as if fatalism carries in itself the ‘belief’ of failure, or a negative outlook on the outcome of one’s own efforts to resolve a problem or improve a situation. In terms of understanding the relevance of the contribution of the social cognitive learning theory to the understanding of fatalism in adolescents, Woolfolk’s contribution (2013) pertaining the role of beliefs and self-perceptions is of paramount importance.

Woolfolk (2013, p. 442) postulated that a child's beliefs is an important explanatory factor in the broader picture of personal motivation. Motivation is usually described as an internal state that arouses, directs and maintains behaviour. Motivation usually depends on the following: (1) What choices do people make about their behaviour? (2) How long does it take before someone gets started? (3) What is the involvement in the chosen activity? (4) What causes someone to persist and give up? (5) What is the person thinking and feeling when engaged in the activity (Woolfolk, 2013, p. 430)? In social cognitive theory, motivation is generally seen as the relationship between expectancy and value theories – the individual's expectation of attaining a goal and the value that the goal has for him or her (Woolfolk, 2013, p. 433). This might have significant bearing on the theory of fatalism as a mind-set that takes away all expectancy to succeed. Without any, or a very low expectancy to succeed, a person may theoretically become fatalistic in his or her thought processes. These thought processes might centre heavily on what one believes about oneself and the world and how one perceives oneself and the environment. The hermeneutical model of fatalism suggests that personal perceptions and one's lived experience may be an important point of departure for the cycle of fatalism. According to Woolfolk (2013, pp. 443-447) certain beliefs are important considerations in a child's ability and will to learn. Fatalism creates a feeling of "not-knowing" how to affect a positive outcome in a particular situation or in certain circumstances. To turn this mind-set around requires self-efficacy, which will in turn enable the child to learn new skills to situations that previously may have seemed "hard" or "impossible to do". Self-efficacy can be facilitated by helping the child to continuously master new solutions successfully and thereby installing a set of positive beliefs that may increase self-efficacy.

Learning, according to Woolfolk (2013) will be partially determined by the beliefs and self-perceptions of the child, which include:

- Epistemological beliefs or beliefs about knowing: Especially important here is the child's ability to understand new knowledge as the relationship between facts or a complex structure of concepts and relationships. The child should also have the nous to understand that he or she has the

ability to learn new outcomes, that it will be a process over time and will require the development of one's own understanding of events and circumstances.

- Beliefs about ability: Two views of ability exist – an entity view and an incremental view. An entity view presupposes that one's ability is a stable, uncontrollable trait – a characteristic that cannot be changed (note how closely this resonates with the idea of determinism expressed in the theory of fatalism.) An incremental view suggests that ability is unstable and uncontrollable and can be increased by hard work and study or practice. Woolfolk (2013, p. 443) mentions the opinions of (Dweck, 2000 and Stipek, 2002) who postulated that younger children tend to hold an exclusively incremental view of ability “hard work makes you smarter.” At the onset of adolescence, children can differentiate between effort, ability and performance. At about this time they start believing that someone who succeeds without working at all must be clever. At this point, their beliefs about their own ability also begin to influence their motivation (Anderman and Anderman, 2010; as cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p. 443). An entity view might be of particular importance in the onset of fatalistic thinking about one's own ability and academic success. Woolfolk (2013, p. 443) noted that children with an entity view of ability tend to set performance avoidance goals to avoid looking bad in the eyes of others. They seek situations in which they can look smart, protect their self-esteem and avoid the risk of failure. Beliefs about ability are related to other beliefs about what you can or cannot control in learning (locus of control) (Woolfolk, 2013, p. 443).
- Sometimes one seeks an explanation for one's motivation by trying to make sense of one's own behaviour or the behaviour of others in order to provide explanations and causes. The attribution theories (Anderman and Anderman, 2010 cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p. 443) describes how the individual's explanations, justifications and excuses influence motivation, for example, that good performance is attributed to the fact that others are either “smart,” lucky, or work hard (their ability is caused by their attributes). This corresponds very well with the concepts of chance,



determinism and locus of control as underpinning beliefs of fatalism. Once these core beliefs are applied to the attribution theory in the context of school learning by Weiner (2010, as cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p. 444), a remarkable resemblance with fatalism is noted. Weiner (2010) used the dimensions of locus (the internal or external locus of the cause of success), stability (whether the cause is stable over time and in different circumstances) and controllability (whether the person can control the cause). In terms of learning, these dimensions will inevitably lead to a specific feeling of control (or being out of control) in the individual.

- Belief about self-worth: Seligman (1975; cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p.445) postulated that, when people come to believe that the events and outcomes in their lives are mostly uncontrollable, they have developed learned helplessness. In a situation where they believe that they cannot control the outcome, they may not even try, even though the outcome may be perfectly attainable from an objective point of view. Children, who expect to fail, will not be motivated to try. Children who are pessimistic about learning and their own ability may miss opportunities to improve and develop cognitive deficits. These children may also suffer from affective problems, such as depression, anxiety and listlessness (Alloy and Seligman, 1979; as cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p. 446). The relationship between self-worth and fatalism becomes obvious.

Although the beliefs as described by Woolfolk and others from the perspective of social cognitive learning theory are extremely valuable in building an understanding of adolescent learning, they should be viewed in the context of beliefs and values as determined by the social realities of adolescents. This will provide one with a clearer understanding of fatalism in adolescents (if present) and how the social realities of adolescents might affect their ability to learn and engage with formal processes of education.

### **2.3.4 The role of socially determined beliefs in the context of adolescents**

Bearing in mind the content of this literature review, suffice to say that both the beliefs in chance (sometimes called the belief in good luck) and determinism possibly exist in South African society as these can be considered universal philosophical underpinnings of fatalism. Beck describes such beliefs as “the most fundamental form of beliefs; they are global, rigid and overgeneralized” (2011, p. 24). Beliefs in ‘chance’ or ‘good luck’ and determinism may fit into Beck’s (2011, p. 32) description of never or seldom articulated core beliefs.

Once one moves to the next level of intermediate beliefs, which are more easily articulated and specifically related to the personal and social environment, one needs to look at the way in which two beliefs, namely nihilism (the belief that nothing is worthwhile because no good can come of it) and the belief in external locus of control, possibly manifest in South African society.

#### **2.3.4.1 Nihilism, a social belief with many faces**

Nihilism may be seen as a fundamental reflection of the cultures of a society or a community, mirroring the prevailing social, political, economic and spiritual ethos of the times. Various factors, conducive to a nihilistic worldview, evoke the following responses in the individual - *angst*, hopelessness, despair and fear which can contribute to the cognitive belief that he or she is not in control of his or her own destiny. This, in turn, resonates with the classic definition of fatalism as mentioned in Section 2.3.2 (Bernard et al, 2011, p. 3) and emphasises the connection between “belief” and “behaviour” (Roberts et al., 2005, p. 239-240).

In a nihilistic environment, a profound loss of purpose and meaning prevails, resulting in a significant loss of optimism and hope in the face of the odds that seem overwhelming. “Fatalism is one of the principal fruits of a nihilistic philosophy” (West, 1993; as cited in Powe & Johnson, 1995, p. 123). One could be critical and ask whether nihilism determines fatalism, or whether fatalism is a determining factor of nihilism. It could be important to understand that all the different elements in the hermeneutical cycle are interdependent. I argued that nihilism in society represents

an essential intermediate belief that might, in the early stages of the cognitive cycle of meaning making, lead to fatalism. In the continuation this cognitive process, fatalism might in turn influence the nature and strength of nihilism in society.

Powe and Johnson (1995, p.123) argued that fatalism could be described as a capitulation of the human spirit to external forces, which destroys hope, self-efficacy and potential. Low self-esteem, chronically adverse circumstances, hopelessness and despair fuel a fatalistic mind-set. According to Powe and Johnson (1995, p.123), the prevalence of nihilism could be gleaned from all aspects of American Society – for example: the art form of rap music reveals much of the negative sentiments of African-American society. The influence of the largely negative rap-culture on adolescents is well-documented (De Genova, 1995, pp. 89–132; Kubrin 2005, pp. 433-442). The interaction between fatalism and nihilism should be emphasised. One's experience of hopelessness and despair might eventually validate the nihilistic perspectives of society, thus becoming a self-perpetuating, vicious cycle, as argued above.

The experience of nihilism, especially in the previously disadvantaged black community, is deeply embedded in the historical experience of black people in South Africa. Ncgobo (1999, p. 141) argued that the nihilism in black South African society is directly traceable to the white conquest, especially as it manifested historically through land dispossession, racial oppression and the exploitation of black labour. This culminated in widespread humiliation. Africans became a labour commodity owned by whites, thus alienating the African from himself (see also section 2.2.2 on fatalism and alienation as argued by Karl Marx).

Ncgobo (1999, p. 141) further postulated that the sights of unprotected, helpless, poor and exploited African labourers, who work and live in in-human conditions, created an increase in feelings about worthlessness in African life. The wretchedness of the African labourer and devastation of African life have been in sharp contrast to the affluence of white society – a reality that tends to reinforce the inferiority of one group and the superiority of another.

Ncgobo (1999, p, 34) also argued that the search for identity is what lies at the root of black nihilism in South Africa (For an explanation of what I understand under the concept of identity, please refer to the section on psychosocial theory by Erikson in the chapter 3, section 3.2.1.2.) The liberation struggle during the years of Apartheid provided a new identity, especially to black youth. This is the reason why so many of them joined the black liberation movement. Once identity was constructed, life became meaningful and purposeful. In the same vein, Essien Dom (1962, p.83) upheld identity and the desire for self-improvement, as the principal motives for African Americans to join the Islamic community, and remain in it. However, this identity among South African black people was suddenly lost after the abolishment of apartheid in 1994. The political movements and structures that once provided stability and purpose in the black community were disbanded. "This led to the destruction of hope, the death of a collective ethos, a loss of purpose and a lack of faith in leadership" (Ncgobo, 1999, p. 145). Matters were exacerbated by the fact that very little came from the lucrative political promises that were made in the transition to democracy. In the black community, there was an expectation of transformation by the redistribution of wealth, but in fact, they met with a free market economy, resulting in a very unstable labour market with extensive unemployment. This contributed significantly to the formation of a nihilistic experience in black society (Ncgobo, 1999, pp. 146-147).

The experience of nihilism in black South African communities, and how it is shaped by the loss of identity, needs further discussion. Donald et al. (2010, p. 225) mentioned that, "especially in poor urban communities, gang violence is a growing and very disturbing social problem in South African society." It especially affects schools and education. Although the reasons behind it are complex, it can perhaps be traced back to the crisis of economic and personal identity, as explained by Ncgobo (1999, pp. 146-147). Ncgobo, (1999, pp.151-152) mentioned the role of violence, especially armed violence, in the creation of a nihilistic society. Many disillusioned young people have access to firearms and use them to terrorise their own communities with violence to achieve their means and gain an illusion of empowerment. Donald et al. (2010, p. 225) postulated that, of this group of young people, a significant number grew up without a stable family and social environment in which they did not gain acceptance from their parents or peers, a particular need

during adolescence. They then became part of the antisocial culture of gangs and commit acts of violence as a “rite of passage” in order to gain some form of acceptance. Pinnock (1997; as cited in Donald et al., 2010, p. 225) argued that this is often the only kind of acceptance for a community’s youth. This excessive violence in society causes the black middle class to migrate from the townships towards safer areas, leaving the remainder of the community who cannot afford to move from the townships trapped in an insufferable situation, leaving them defeated, hopeless and exposed. This possibly contributes to the current feeling of nihilism in black society (Ncgobo, 1999, pp.151-152) that may become the breeding ground for fatalism in the individual. These kinds of experiences may define the lived experiences of many adolescents.

In South Africa, nihilism and fatalism is however not restricted to only the poor and disadvantaged communities. In the first decade of the millennium, nihilism and fatalism appeared to be prevalent among middle-class and affluent white adolescents from a previously advantaged background. Klopper (2009, p. 127-130) refers to the argument of Strianti (2000, pp. 231-232) that the breakdown of identity occurred with the emergence of postmodernism. Established identities in society, like social class, the core and extended family, religion, the local community and the neighbourhood, gave people a sense of security. With the transition in society, these established identities were broken down and established by very fluid unstable identities, international trends and the effect of capitalism. The omnipresence of the mass media also gives people a distorted perception of time and place (Strinati, 2000, p. 238).

With the dawn of democracy in 1994, the affluent white youth of the country was also influenced. Klopper (2009, p.118) argued that the loss of political power in 1994, has placed white youth, especially the Afrikaner youth, in a liminal position regarding the formation of their identity. They suddenly questioned their identity from a position of the problematic violent past that led to feelings of fear, anger and guilt. Added to these was the insecurity that stems from the loss of opportunity due to the implementation of affirmative action in an effort to redress the wrongs of apartheid. This left white youth in a very vulnerable situation, creating a nihilistic perception about the future. The meteoric rise of Afrikaans punk-rock band, *Fokofpolisiekar*

(translated, means “fuck off, police car”), with its extremely hedonistic and nihilistic lyrics, reflected the nihilistic outlook of the generation; the feeling that the establishment has failed them and that they have no hope for the future. Nihilistic racist crime also came to the fore amongst adolescents as was for instance evident in the case of the convicted *Waterkloof Vier (Four)*. Rademeyer (2007, p.6) reported on the conviction of four young men who brutally assaulted a black man and, later that same night, killed another black, homeless man. The case of the so-called “Waterkloof four” ignited heated and emotional debates during the next four years, suggesting a strong racial undertone on both sides of the argument. According to Rademeyer (2007, p.6), the psychological evaluations presented to the judge described the four young killers as, among other things, “religious”. A link between racial violence and religion was described in research done in the United Kingdom. Williamson (2004, as cited in Coleman and Hagell, 2007, p. 33-34) noting that racism and a lack of respect for religious or cultural differences continued to be a part of ethnic minorities in the UK. A similar situation may be prevalent in South Africa where the previously advantaged group of the Apartheid era has now become an ethnic minority, deprived of their political position of privilege. This might have given rise to the attitude of animosity towards other groups in an effort to “defend” their own culture and religion. This defensive attitude may spring from a deeply engrained theological concept that was part of the Calvinistic churches in the Apartheid era that the Afrikaner people were God’s chosen people, determined to fulfil his divine purpose (Ras, Volk en Nasie, 1975). This perception of a divinely determined purpose, in this case of a specific group, might be described as ‘destiny’. These views may probably still exist in a segment of the Afrikaner population and represent an attitude often communicated from parent to child. The association of divine purpose with one’s own group, which is then deprived of social and political power, may result in a nihilistic outlook on reality and a violent attitude towards those who are perceived to have taken away a specific position or privilege. This thought is supported by Donald et al. (2010, p. 224) who related political or collective violence to “imbalances and distortions in the power and access to resources of different groups in society,” and to basic differences in political viewpoints and goals. They mentioned that children who were brought up in oppressive or violent social contexts are particularly at risk. Lazarus et al. (2009) and Lees (2008) as cited in Donald et al. (2010, p. 224), postulated that this type of violence might occur when

children have internalized oppression into their images and feelings about themselves, either as victims or perpetrators of oppression.

The propensity for high risk behaviour in some South African adolescent populations, in all ethnic and cultural groups, ties in with the fatalistic engagement of adolescents in high-risk behaviour in which a very negative outlook on the future exists as part of a complex nihilistic worldview (Donald et al., 2010, p. 224; Kalichman et al., 1997, p. 542). It becomes almost axiomatic that the malicious interplay between fatalism and nihilism, as it manifests in the South African society, might influence the lived experiences of adolescents, thus also affecting their engagement in the formal processes of society like education and training.

Adolescent beliefs, like those of adults, are varied and largely determined by the social context. Of particular interest with regard to the disengagement from education, are the traditional African values of the family. In many communities in southern Africa expectations regarding the economic, and especially the social role of girls, have often resulted in them leaving school early (Davidson, 1993; Tumushabe et. al., 1997; as cited in Donald et al., 2010, p. 175). The traditional beliefs about the role of the individual in the family and community are important. Mbiti (1989, pp. 104-106) alluded to the fact that in traditional African life, the individual cannot exist alone, except corporately in relationship to the family and extended family. "The individual can only say: 'I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am.'" These issues are deeply complex and do not exist in isolation. Skinner (et. al., 2004, as cited in Donald et al., 2010, p. 174) mentioned that, in traditional black South African communities, older girls are often responsible to take care of sick parents and caregivers as part of their social responsibility. The HIV/AIDS pandemic exacerbated the situation.

An equally problematic situation arises where African children have assimilated more individualistic western beliefs, and are still expected to comply with the communal beliefs of their community (Mbiti, 1989, pp. 211-213). Dropping out of school and becoming a caregiver, may no longer be a matter of personal choice or an understanding of responsibility, but something she is forced to do. Again, an external locus of control is under discussion. Such a conflict of values where the



value of the community is more pressing than that of the individual, may potentially lead to fatalism.

Lastly, the personal beliefs of adolescents about their personal ability, their motivation, their place in society, their goals and their ability to attain them all come to the fore in the dilemma of the school dropout (Donald et al., 2010, pp. 177-181)

In the light of the above, it appears that fatalism in adolescents may indeed become a barrier to learning because it may affect a complete disengagement from the formal process of education or, a weaker continuous engagement, resulting in weak educational outcomes. The challenge remains to keep the child in touch with the educational system for as long as possible to provide educational support (Donald et al., 2010, p. 176), facilitate the integration of school dropouts (p. 177), provide a support structure for children who are at risk (pp. 178-181; 159-169). Above all, an environment for pastoral support must be created in which the more vulnerable child at risk of fatalism might learn to cope and attain life skills.

## **2.4 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter I tried to establish a broad understanding of fatalism as a possibly cognitive phenomenon, as well as the philosophical, social and psychological underpinnings thereof. Because of the multi-faceted nature of the construct of fatalism, I attempted an integration of various voices, such as social cognitive theory, cognitive theory and hermeneutics in order help me in the process of meaning making. I tried to comprehend how these voices related to my own understanding of fatalism as a cognitive construct. I had to acknowledge that fatalism as a construct would, in terms of this study, be embedded in how the participants understood and interpreted their individual lived experiences. I began to conceptualise how different factors may concur to create the context for the adolescent in which learning and academic attainment may be influenced. It emerged to me that the factors determining adolescent fatalism are deeply reciprocal. Personal, behavioural and environmental factors concur to create a specific cognitive response in the individual. When the lived experiences of the individual are interpreted through specific beliefs with regard to the loss of



personal agency, such as beliefs in determinism and in luck as external loci of control, it may cause a specific cognitive process in the individual. Through cognition, the individual may assess his or her ability to affect a desired outcome in a given set of circumstances. If the individual has a low belief in his/her own efficacy or hold beliefs of self-inefficacy, fatalism may occur. The cognition of fatalism may then lead to emotional, behavioural and psychological responses such as passive coping, anxiety and depression. These responses may, in turn colour the lived experiences of adolescents in a specific way, may further determine their world view and perspective by which they may proceed to assess future lived experiences.

It was also important to place the main arguments of social cognitive theory in the context of adolescent learning and development. In the next chapter I attended to the specific characteristics of the adolescent developmental phase which could possibly affect the way in which fatalism manifests within this population. I explored the physical, cognitive, social and psychological development of the adolescent; how he/she lives in a reciprocal relationship with the environment, as well as how his/her own personal attributes and the environmental influences may affect his behaviour.

## CHAPTER 3

# LITERATURE REVIEW: INFLUENCES OF ADOLESCENCE IN FATALISM

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I attempted to bring together various perspectives from the literature regarding the specific developmental characteristics of adolescence. I particularly focused on the physiological development of the adolescent brain, as well as on the cognitive and psychosocial development of adolescents. In addition, I investigated various perspectives on possible determinants of adolescent fatalism in the South African context, using a social cognitive approach. I further focused on fatalistic thinking in adolescents as a potential barrier to academic attainment. This research study attempted to explore fatalism in terms of the lived experiences of adolescents. The following questions were asked in this chapter: Firstly, which internal or external events (personal, social, economic and political circumstances) may influence how adolescents view themselves in relation to others, the world and those influences that may seem beyond their control? Secondly, how do they respond to these circumstances and what determines their behaviour, and thirdly, how do their responses affect their own lived experiences? To try to answer these questions, I employed Bandura's model of reciprocal causation to orientate the inquiry within the chosen theoretical framework, mainly because of its specific focus on human agency and the role of self-efficacy in individual lives. To my mind, these concepts have the potential to shed light on how fatalism may manifest in adolescents. As discussed before, social cognitive theory emphasises the reciprocal relationship between the self, the environment (*inter alia*, the other or others) and emergent behaviour (Bandura, 2007 as cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p. 399). These three factors may prove critical in the conceptualisation and understanding of possible fatalism in adolescents. See Figure 2.7 for an illustration of Bandura's model. The personal attributes of adolescence are now discussed.

### **3.2 PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES OF ADOLESCENCE**

Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino and Pastorelli (2003, p. 769) described adolescence as a particularly demanding developmental phase that arrives with a large number of challenges. Adolescents have to manage significant biological, educational and social role transitions simultaneously. Learning how to cope with puberty changes, changes in their school environment, larger peer networks, as well as giving attention to emotionally invested partnership and the development of their sexuality, become important. In addition, adolescents must regulate a sense of growing independence, which for some, may mean experimenting with risky activities. This risk-taking behaviour may become anti-social. Developing gender differences bring their own challenges in adolescence as girls may become more emotionally vulnerable to depression (Bandura et al, 2003, p. 770). This gender-related vulnerability could be ascribed to hormonal influences (Konrad, Firk & Ulhaas, 2013, p. 429). In addition, older adolescents must deal with the demands of emerging adulthood. Self-efficacy emerges as a critical component in the adolescent's ability during this formative stage. Self-efficacy plays an important role in the adolescent's ability to choose and set a positive life-path (Bandura et al, 2003, p. 770).

If fatalistic thinking perturbs these vital processes of adolescence, it may affect a negative outcome for the individual. Therefore it is important to take a closer look at the personal characteristics that play a role during adolescence, as some of them may in fact contribute to fatalistic thinking.

#### **3.2.1 Developmental characteristics of adolescence**

During my review of literature related to fatalism, the concept of fatalism in adolescents emerged as a predominantly cognitive one, but with firm roots in the emotional and behavioural worlds of human beings. This section therefore firstly focuses on the cognitive development of the adolescent as it pertains to this study by drawing on the work of Bandura and Piaget. A discussion on the adolescent brain follows, linking both the cognitive and psycho-social development of the adolescent.

The psycho-social development of the adolescent will receive further focus by drawing on the seminal work of Erikson.

### **3.2.1.1 Cognitive development**

In this inquiry, I focused mainly on the developmental/learning theory of Bandura, but also incorporated the work of Piaget as far as the cognitive development of the adolescent is concerned and especially with regard to the manner in which cognitive processes may contribute to the development of fatalism. Both Bandura and Piaget regarded the individual as the unit of analysis, arguing that a sound understanding of the individual can only be reached if one understands how the individual processed what has been internalised (Tudge & Winterhoff, 1993, p. 77-81 in Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009, pp. 298 - 210).

According to Dupree, (in Swanson et al., 2010, p. 64) the work of Piaget is still relevant in terms of understanding human cognitive development. Two Piagetian concepts seem to be important: schemata and operations. A schema (singular) may be seen as one of the different sensorimotor maps that a child constructs about his or her world in early development. As development progresses, the child increases his or her own ability to represent the outer world in internal images and thoughts. Once these internal 'pictures' are constructed, development is possible. Development commences with operations, which are logical thoughts, actions and sets of actions (Donald et al., 2010, p. 50; Dupree in: Swanson et al., 2010, p. 64). The construction of these inner pictures relates to the suggestions of Dweck (2006), a cognitive theorist, regarding the importance of implicit theories in the mind. Yaeger and Dweck (2012, pp., 302-314) discussed the importance of implicit theories in developing mind-sets that may promote resilience in children. They argued that implicit theories could be defined as core assumptions about the malleability of personal qualities. Yaeger and Dweck's implicit theories do not differ much from Beck's description of core beliefs as mentioned in the discussion of the cognitive model in chapter two (Section 2.3.1). As is the case with Beck's notion of core beliefs, these implicit theories are seldom made explicit. They are frameworks by which one makes predictions and gives meaning to the events in one's world. They refer to a person's common sense explanations for events. These theories can refer

to any personal attribute, but Yeager and Dweck (2012, pp., 302-314) mentioned two which are particularly relevant to education: Implicit theories of intelligence and implicit theories of personality. These implicit theories are divided into entity theories and incremental theories. Learners with an entity theory of intelligence see themselves as endowed with a fixed amount of intelligence that will remain the same throughout their lives. Learners with an incremental theory see intelligence as something that can grow and develop over time. People with a fixed or entity view of personality see people's socially relevant traits as something that cannot change, while people with an incremental personality theory will see personality as something that can change and develop over time (Yeager & Dweck, 2012, pp. 302-314). What a child believes about him/herself may pertain to his/her academic motivation, resilience and expectancy to improve or succeed. It may also affect his/her resilience when faced with adversity: "When we emphasize people's potential to change, we prepare our learners to face life's challenges resiliently" (Yeager & Dweck, 2012, pp., 302-314). These implicit theories also relate to the adolescent's new ability to understand and apply abstract concepts, as Piaget (1950) argued.

The period of adolescence fits into Piaget's fourth operational stage – the formal operational stage (Piaget, 1950; Piaget & Inhelder, 1973). During this period the child may progress from the less abstract concrete operational phase to that of formal operations. This phase is characterised by the ability to engage in more abstract thinking, which includes the ability to interpret things according to abstract principles and the development of more complex language structures, for example, the understanding of metaphors (Donald et al., 2010, p. 51; Dupree in: Swanson et al., 2010, p.65).

According to Piaget, cognitive development has three important characteristics:

- Inheritance and natural maturation is an important contributor to the development of the child. However, cognitive development is also based on the active engagement with and explorations of his or her physical and social world (Donald et al., 2010, p. 53). At this stage it may be important to note that active involvement with his or her own process of education may prove to be critical in the cognitive development of a child. It may also be important in the child's attainment of specific social and psychological milestones.

- Cognitive development is sequential and goes through different stages in which small units of information is gathered through assimilation at different times and different speeds. He or she learns how new units of information fits into existing knowledge (accommodation) and how it changes his or her experience (adaptation) (Dupree, in: Swanson et al., 2010, p. 65). The child is gradually developing his or her skills in organising and manipulating information. The social and physical environment in which the child grows up is important influences in his or her progression. It is important to note that children develop at a different tempo ((Donald et al., 2010, p. 54). Maturation seems to be a slow and varied process.
- Children and adults differ in terms of the quality of their thinking. The organisational, logical and abstract capabilities of a child are still developing and are not on par with that of adults. This does not only affect their cognitive development, but also the way in which they understand the world and social relations. It affects the way in which they handle social, moral and emotional issues as they develop (Donald et al., 2010, p. 54).

Adolescents are more likely to think about themselves in both concrete ways (e.g., their physical characteristics and activities they engage in), as well as in abstract ways (e.g., the values they display, their perceptions about their own mental capacities) (Dupree, in: Swanson et al., 2010, p. 65). They are now more able to analyse situations logically in terms of cause and effect. Adolescents also develop the ability to process hypothetical situations and use symbols, such as in metaphors, imaginatively (Piaget, 1950, Piaget & Inhelder, 1973). Adolescents use more intricate processing strategies and can deliberate the multiple dimensions of a matter simultaneously. They are able to reflect on themselves and complicated problems. This higher-level thinking allows them to think about the future, evaluate alternatives, and set personal goals (Keating, in Feldman and Elliot, 1990, pp. 47-51).

Although there are marked individual differences in cognitive development among adolescents, these new capacities allow them to engage in the kind of introspection and mature decision making that was previously beyond their reach. Cognitive competence includes actions such as the ability to reason effectively, solve

problems, think abstractly, reflect, and plan for the future. They are able to imagine potential outcomes for experiences they have not yet engaged in. They become more self-conscious and self-reflective. They develop an increasing awareness of how they are seen by others and some may develop an “imaginary audience” – an expression of how they think they are seen by others (Steinberg, 2008, p.11). However, adolescents may still experience difficulty in predicting the outcome of their actions. Their inability to interpret relevant factors that may influence them or their lived experiences may result in uncalculated risk-taking (Steinberg, 2008, p. 4; Dupree, in: Swanson et al., 2010, p. 65). As far as adolescent risk-taking is concerned, recent neuroimaging studies suggest that differences in brain activation in the mesolimbic circuitry might account for this propensity for risk-taking in adolescence (Bjork, Knutson, Fong, Caggiano, Bennett & Hommer, 2004, p. 1801). This may also be caused by the delayed development in the prefrontal cortex, as I will discuss later in this chapter. These distinct internal biological and psychological developments are coupled with the development of adolescents in their social contexts (Steinberg, 2008, p. 4). A multi-faceted approach to the intricacies of adolescence is desirable in order to understand the particular characteristics of this life stage better, including the role that culture plays.

The reciprocal relationship between the individual and the culture in which he/she develops is best understood from the viewpoint of a key element of social cognitive theory: modelling as learning by observing others (vicarious learning) (Woolfolk, 2013, p. 400). Three factors seem to be important here. Firstly, the developmental level of the individual who learns influences the learning process. As children grow older they gain increased attention spans, improved abilities to use memory strategies to retain information and increased powers of self-motivation to master tasks. Secondly, the status of the model in the eyes of the learner is a determining factor. Children are more likely to imitate the actions of others they perceive as competent, powerful, prestigious and enthusiastic. Thirdly, by observing others, a child learns about the behaviour that may be appropriate. Role models that he/or she can identify with becomes important (Woolfolk, 2013, p. 700). Modelling becomes a key component when we consider the relationship between the adolescent and the culture in which he/she grows up in (Bandura, 2002, p. 272).

It is commonly said that “adolescence begins in biology and ends in culture” (Smetana, Campione-Barr & Metzger, 2006, p. 258). Culture, with the various influences it contains, shapes cognitive development by co-determining how and what one learns. Culture dictates what a developing child is exposed to and how he or she is expected to respond appropriately in interaction with the cultural environment. Therefore, the particular characteristics of a culture, and the zeitgeist that permeates the culture, become important. In the process of observational learning, a child (adolescent, for the purpose of this inquiry) will observe and pay attention to certain things in a culture. If the model is compelling enough, the child may try to reproduce the behaviour. This behaviour, according to Bandura, is reinforced in a threefold way. Firstly there is direct reinforcement that consists of positive reinforcement by the model once the reproduced behaviour is executed. Secondly there could be indirect reinforcement (vicarious reinforcement) when the child imitates the successful behaviour for which others were reinforced. Thirdly there is self-reinforcement by which a person controls his/her own re-enforcers (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175-1177; Woolfolk, 2013, pp.401-402). Bandura (2002, p. 272) postulated that human nature has great potential that can be shaped by direct and vicarious experiences into a variety of forms within the bounds of biological determinants. Human beings are able of meaningful interactions with culture. They create meaning by manipulating their environments in order to cope. In the process of meaningful manipulation of their environments they use human characteristics such as “generative symbolisation, forethought, evaluative self-regulation, reflective self-consciousness and symbolic communications” (Bandura, 2002, p. 272).

Specific behaviour can be learnt in a person’s interaction with culture. Cultural models may have the effect of fine-tuning already learnt behaviours, for example, the child may imitate the dress and grooming of a television personality. Children may learn new behaviours by imitating social role models. Furthermore, a cultural model may strengthen or weaken inhibitions, especially when the model’s behaviour has either positive or negative consequences. For example, when a child sees another person punished for unruly behaviour, it may affect the child’s decision-making when in similar circumstances. (Woolfolk, 2013, pp. 402-403).



In chapter 2, section 2.3.4.1, the possible influence of nihilism on youth culture was discussed briefly. The examples of the nihilistic character of American rap culture (De Genova, 1995, pp. 89–132; Kubrin 2005, pp. 433-442), and the possibility of political nihilism among white and black South African youth (Ncgobo, 1999, p. 141), was discussed. The effect of culture in the current zeitgeist in South African society cannot be underestimated. What is of particular importance is how nihilistic worldview is transferred from the wider context of society into the cognitive processes of individual adolescents. It could be that the language and social actions of adults and peers may shape the cognitive processes of adolescents, especially in terms of their understanding of their own lived experiences and how they are to respond to it. Adolescents are drawn into the discourses of society by means of modelling (Bandura, 2002, pp. 272-273). Bray et al. (2010, pp. 289-308) emphasised the importance of social role models in the development of adolescents in a study performed among Cape Town youth. Social meaning-making on the part of adolescents occur *inter alia* by their engagement in conversation with and observation of older people, or, in the absence of adult role models, their peers. Bray et al (2010, p. 289) noted that young people appear to make their choices within a very narrow frame of reference and, in the absence of adult role models or advisors will look to their peers to decide on their actions.

All societies tell stories to their children, and each other, as forms of entertainment and education. Stories bring the community and its members together in a shared understanding of the world and their place in it (Deacon & Stephney, 2005). The language by which adults make meaning of their worlds is also heard by children. Children, in turn, model their own language on that of adults in their proximity. Bray et al. (2010, pp. 308) mentioned that the negative discourses among adults in the community often have a negative effect on young people's motivation and can easily trap them in a "cycle of negativity" (Jardien & Collett, 2006, in Bray et al., 2010, p. 308), thereby affecting their self-efficacy and self-agency and their general ability to cope. The way in which adolescents are affected by negative local discourses and the processes of socialisation in their communities may severely curtail their beliefs of self-efficacy, agency and ability to cope. However, the opposite is also true. Bray et al. (2010, p. 308) found that "those with a history of high-quality intimate relationships in the home, good communication and social skills and a robust, but

flexible, temperament are able to sustain the personal coherence and integrity to carve a path through these barriers.”

One may therefore assume that the narrative, or what is spoken about the world as it is represented in the language of culture, may have a profound influence on the way in which children understand the world and their place in it. This may pertain to all forms of learning – cognitive, behavioural and the learning of attitudes, values and world view. If one takes Piaget’s and Bandura’s emphasis on the social aspect of learning into consideration, all involved in the education of the child would affect the way in which they learn – and possibly their academic attainment. Bray et al. (2010, p. 63) gave an excellent example of how children’s behaviour in specific communities and households are influenced by negative socialisation by their parents and educators. The classroom environment and what is communicated by the teacher in the classroom, has a significant influence on learning and engaging with the education process (Bray et al., p. 44). The opposite is also true (Bray et al., p. 116). In a school environment where there is a positive narrative and language, the environment becomes conducive to better engagement with the processes of education and learning. How this may happen, has been discussed in the review of literature discussing the psychosocial development of the child. The adolescent brain will now be the focus.

### **3.2.1.2. *The adolescent brain***

In this section I focused on the following: 1) Biological determinants in adolescent brain development, including influences on the structural development of the adolescent brain such as hormonal changes and neurochemical influences; 2) the structural development of the adolescent brain; 3) the effects on the psycho-neural processes of adolescence such as the display of social and self-regulatory competence. McAnarney (2008, pp. 321-323) noted that health conditions during adolescence are sometimes bio-behavioural. These bio-behavioural processes originate from a combination of genetic attributes, massive endocrinal change during puberty, and the environment. The interaction between genetic, environmental and biological factors is therefore reciprocal and virtually impossible to distinguish (Barr & Sandor, 2009, p. 13-14; McAnarney, 2008, pp. 321-323). Genetic and environmental

factors collaborate to create a unique personal biology in an individual that will probably influence behaviour.

- **Biological determinants in adolescent brain development: The influence of hormonal and neurochemical changes on brain structure and function**

It seems that significant hormonal and neurochemical changes govern the structural and functional development of the adolescent brain. Practically, the brain develops from the inside out with the structures of the limbic system reaching full development long before the cortical areas. This asynchrony in development has a biological influence on adolescent behaviour which concurs with the maturation of certain brain areas. This means that certain areas in the brain are possibly responsible for specific behavioural choices which may change as the brain matures (Casey et al., 2008, p.11).

The presence of significant hormonal changes with the onset of puberty and during early adolescence is widely accepted. These hormonal changes may cause specific changes in patterns of structural and functional development. There are a number of sex differences in the development of the adolescent brain. Lenroodt and Giedd (2004, in: McAnarney, 2008, pp. 321-323; Konrad, Firk & Ulhaas, 2013, p. 429) mentioned that grey matter volumes peak earlier in males in the frontal, temporal and parietal regions. Similarly, there seems to be a sexual difference in white matter development, with males showing steeper increases in white matter volume across adolescence as compared to females (Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429).

The maturation of the reproductive system during puberty results in a rise of gonadal steroid hormones (androgens and oestrogens). Because of the high density of steroid receptors in the brain, it could be that the sex hormones have an effect on the neural networks in adolescence. If one compares this to the studies by Lenroodt and Giedd (2006, In: Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429) about the structural differences in brain development between males and females, it becomes plausible (Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429). Sisk and Foster (2004, In Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429) reasoned that adolescents may undergo a second phase of cerebral restructuring after an earlier

phase of sexual differentiation. They argued that the hormones of puberty affect the structural development of the adolescent brain, which results in a permanent cortical reorganisation of the neural networks (circuits). These neural networks become sensitive to activating hormonal effects, partially because of the high volume of steroid receptors in the brain. The increasing concentrations of hormones during puberty have different effects on the developing hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis in boys and girls: The rise in androgens in boys apparently inhibits the hypothalamic secretion of corticotrophin-releasing hormone (CRH), while oestrogens in girls regulate the HPA axis upward. Oestrogens may make girls more susceptible to stress, while androgens make boys more resilient to it (Naninck, Lucassen & Bakker, 2011, pp. 383-392). These hormonal differences and effects may cause adolescents to respond differently to the same environmental stimuli and could cause different cortical reorganisation in males and females. This may partially be responsible for some of the structural differences between male and female brains, which in turn may affect different behavioural responses and differences in social cognition (Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429). The rise of gonadal hormones during adolescence could be the prime suspect. Hormonal changes lead adolescents to seek social rewards and experiences. These puberty driven changes are also reflected in changes in brain activity associated with this life stage (Luciana, 2010, p. 3). Significant hormonal changes are also detected in the stress-related hormonal system during adolescence. For example, social stress in adolescence may increase the threshold for the reward value of drugs. Hormones also play an important role in the regulation of sleep patterns. Barr and Sandor (2009, p.14) mentioned the importance of circadian rhythms in a variety of physiological functions. The disruption of sleeping patterns and the secretion of cortisol is associated with specific psychological functions (Louw, 1990, p. 178). Sleep distortion leads to changes in the circadian rhythms, which affect the secretion of cortisol. Sleep distortion brings about distorted thought, impulsivity and aggression. According to Shapiro (as cited in Barr and Sandor, 2009, p.14) depressed youth with suicidal ideation are three times more likely to have insomnia. Louw (1990, p. 178) mentioned that blood tests of persons with depression revealed much higher levels of cortisol compared to the blood of non-depressed persons. It would thus seem as though there is a strong confluence of specific physiological changes that happen during adolescence and the psychological functioning of young people, specifically

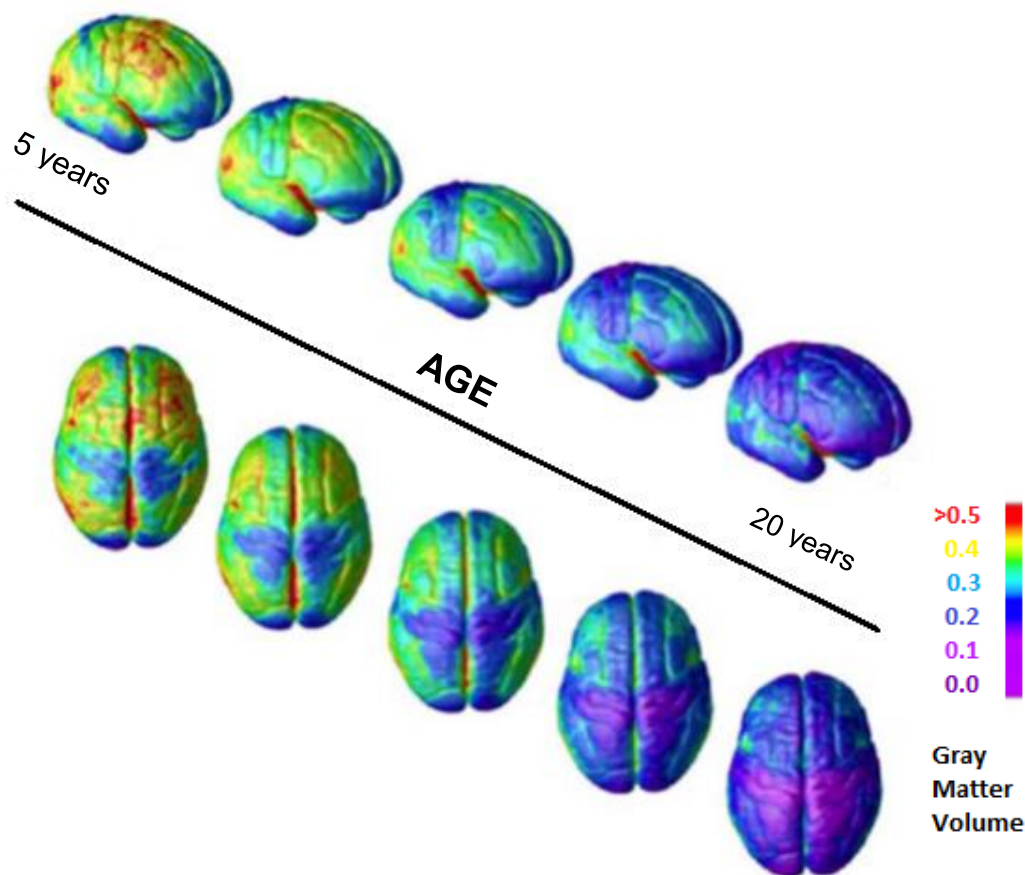
mood and the accompanying thinking patterns. This has to be considered in dealing with adolescents with a fatalistic mind-set, because the treatment of some physiological phenomena such as distorted sleeping patterns may result in an improvement of mood and behaviour, lessening the likelihood of thoughts and behaviour associated with fatalism (Barr and Sandor, 2009, p.14).

Although it may be impossible to separate all the notable influences that impact on the social and emotional behaviour of adolescents, it is likely that the neural development and hormonal changes of adolescence could influence the social and emotional behaviour of adolescents and in the process, social cognition. Under these circumstances, social cognition is likely to change during adolescence due to the influence or imprint of both the social environment and new experiences on the “pruning” of axons in the brain. (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006, pp. 306-307; Konrad et al., 2013, p. 427).

- **The structural development of the adolescent brain**

As we have seen from the previous section, hormonal changes are co-contributors to the unique structural development of the adolescent brain. These hormonal changes form part of a comprehensive chain of events that governs adolescent brain development and are closely linked to biological and environmental determinants. Furthermore the structural development of the adolescent brain is closely linked to major changes in the levels of nervous system activity (Blakemore and Choudhury, 2006, pp. 279-283). After birth, the human brain starts to form great numbers of synapses. There is for instance a vast difference between the synaptic densities in the brains of younger children compared to the brains of adolescents. The synapses are the connections between the neurons in the brain. The synapses multiply through the process of synaptogenesis as the brain develops. These peaks of synaptic density are followed by synaptic decline. A few times during the development of the brain, the more often used connections strengthen, while the infrequently used connections are eliminated. Consequently, billions of nerve cells present in the brain at birth do not survive, and the number of synaptic connections between neurons declines significantly by early adulthood. Through this process of extensive synaptic “pruning”, the nervous system appears to refine itself. Synaptic

pruning is believed to be essential for the fine-tuning of functional networks of brain tissue, rendering the remaining synaptic circuits more efficient (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006, p. 297). This leads to a gradual improvement of the neuropsychological functions of adolescents (Harrel, Neblett & Ikechukwu, in: Swanson et al., 2010, p. 44). It seems that, with the onset of puberty and during early adolescence, a significant perturbation of grey matter occurs. In some areas of the brain it increases while it decreases in other areas. At puberty, grey matter volume in the frontal lobe reaches a peak, followed by a plateau after puberty and then a decline throughout adolescence, continuing until early adulthood (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006, p. 297-298). These changes are illustrated by Figure 3.1 which signifies the changes from ages 5 to 20. The prefrontal cortex and the parietal cortex have been shown to develop consistently during adolescence. These structural changes could be significant in the development of cognitive functions. The structural changes are likely to affect the functions seated in these particular areas, as well as the functions of the areas it connects to. It seems that the areas associated with sensory and motor develop first, while the areas associated with higher functions that have to do with the integration of sensory and motor functions (e.g. executive functions), develop later. The blue and purple areas in the diagram represent the maturation of grey matter towards early adulthood.



**Figure 3.1** *Illustration of grey matter volume maturation over the cortical surface from 5 to 20 years of age* (Lenroodt & Giedd, 2006 in McAnarney, 2008)

The term, 'executive functions,' describes our ability to regulate our thoughts and behaviour. This includes cognitive skills such as attention, decision-making, the inhibition of voluntary responses and working memory. Each individual function is important in cognitive control as they enable us to perform strategic tasks such as filtering out of unimportant information, foreseeing and understanding future consequences of present time actions and to inhibit impulses. These behaviour skills are normally associated with the frontal lobes (Casey, Jones & Hare, 2008, pp. 112. 114, 116, 121). Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)<sup>9</sup> has become a useful

<sup>9</sup> **Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)** utilises a large magnetic field to produce high quality three-dimensional images of brain structures without injecting radioactive tracers. Different structures in the brain (so-called white matter and grey matter, blood vessels, fluid and bone, for example) have different magnetic properties and therefore they appear different in the MRI image. Sensors inside the



instrument in recent studies. Using MRI, it is possible to create detailed and anatomically accurate images of both surface and deep brain structures. (MRI) was used to demonstrate changes in the frontal cortex during adolescence (Casey et al., 2008, pp. 112-116; Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006, pp. 298-300). This may lead one to expect improvement in executive function abilities with age.

- **The development of adolescent brain function: Psycho-neural processes in cognition**

In order to properly review the results of various studies, it is necessary to briefly review the neuropsychological functions of the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex respectively. Adolescence is a time of increased emotional reactivity (Casey et al., 2008, p. 112) which has to do with the maturation of the limbic system. The limbic system is the area of the brain that regulates emotion and memory. It directly connects the lower and higher brain functions. It influences emotions, the visceral responses to those emotions, motivation, mood, and sensations of pain and pleasure. The limbic system is comprised of the following parts: thalamus, hypothalamus, cingulate gyrus, amygdala, hippocampus and the basal ganglia (Louw, 1990, p. 56). The limbic system is often associated with the adolescent behaviours of novelty-seeking, risk-taking and sensation-seeking (McAnarney, 2008, pp. 321-323; Barr and Sandor, 2009, p. 13). However, it is the delayed development of the prefrontal cortex which is often noted as the biological cause of specific adolescent behaviour. Although prefrontal activity may have a significant effect on behaviour, it is not the only cause of suboptimal choices made in adolescence. (Casey et al., 2008, p.112).

In terms of this inquiry, the findings regarding the asynchrony in development of the limbic system and the pre-frontal cortex are important. Walsh (2004, pp. 28-29)

---

scanner record the signals from the different brain structures and a computer uses the information to construct an image.



mentioned that the prefrontal cortex<sup>10</sup> is responsible for cognitive analysis and abstract thought, and the moderation of “appropriate” behaviour in social situations. The so-called “executive functions” of the human prefrontal cortex include: focusing attention, organizing thoughts and problem solving, foreseeing and weighing possible consequences of behaviour, considering the future and making predictions, forming strategies and planning, the ability to balance short-term rewards with long term goals, shifting or adjusting behaviour when situations change, impulse control and delaying gratification, modulation of intense emotions, inhibiting inappropriate behaviour and initiating appropriate behaviour, and simultaneously considering multiple streams of information when faced with complex and challenging information (Blakemore and Choudhury, 2006, p. 296). This relates to Piaget’s fourth operational stage of development in which the individual moves to more abstract levels of thinking (Piaget, 1950, Piaget & Inhelder, 1973). The prefrontal cortex receives and processes sensory information and regulates thoughts and actions to achieve specific goals. It is largely responsible for cognitive control over the impulses of the limbic system (Casey et al., 2008, p.112). The prefrontal cortex is one of the last regions of the brain to reach maturation. Brain research indicating that brain development is not complete until near the age of 25, refers specifically to the delayed development of the prefrontal cortex. This may explain the occurrence of sometimes optimal and sub-optimal decision-making in adolescents.

A fully developed prefrontal cortex provides an individual with the capacity to exercise “good judgment” and make optimal decisions when presented with challenging life situations (Walsh, 2004, pp. 28-29). However, during adolescence the prefrontal cortex is not fully developed yet. This might partially explain their sometimes erroneous judgement and behaviour, especially pertaining to impulse control (i.e. a lack of cognitive control) and risky behaviour (Casey et al, 2008, p. 112). Blakemore and Choudhury (2006, p. 296) postulated that, in the late 1960s and 1970s, research on post-mortem human brains revealed that some brain areas, in particular the prefrontal cortex, continue to develop well beyond early childhood. A decade later, studies by Huttenlocher (1979, as cited in Blakemore and Choudhury, 2006, p. 296) revealed that the structure of the prefrontal cortex still

---

<sup>10</sup> Also see the discussion of the function of the frontal cortex in section 3.4.

undergoes significant changes during puberty and adolescence (De Courten, Garey, & Van Der Loos, 1983; Yakovlev & Lecours, 1967, as cited in Blakemore and Choudhury, 2006, p. 296). This would also explain why impulsiveness in adolescents gradually decreases with age (Casey et al, 2008, p. 112).

Suboptimal decision making can be ascribed dominance of the limbic system over the prefrontal cortex. However, Casey et al. (2008, p. 122) argued that adolescents are as capable as adults of making optimal decisions, but in emotionally charged situations, e.g. under peer-pressure, the more mature limbic system overrules the prefrontal control system, sometimes resulting in sub-optimal decision making. The same authors (2008, p. 122) have cautioned against the thinking that it is only the delayed development of the prefrontal cortex that is responsible for high-risk behaviour. One should also look towards other personal and environmental factors. The early stimulation of the limbic system, before the prefrontal cortex is fully developed, provides a perfect environment for asynchrony between the parts of the brain that affect adolescent novelty-seeking/sensation-seeking and constrains behaviour. Novelty seeking/sensation seeking and risk taking are the basis for considerable growth during adolescence, as well as for the seemingly reckless behaviour of some adolescents (McAnarney, 2008, pp. 321-323). The development of asynchrony in the development of the limbic system and prefrontal cortex, together with other biological and environmental factors seem have an effect on cognition. For the purpose of this study, I have looked towards possible effects on the adolescent's capacity for self-regulation and social competence.

- **The regulation of social and self-regulatory competence**

The prefrontal cortex appears to be instrumental in one's competence for self-regulatory thought and behaviour processes. These may include selective attention, decision-making and response inhibition skills, along with the ability to carry out multiple tasks at once. In addition to executive functions, there is evidence that the prefrontal cortex is involved in several other high-level cognitive capacities, including self-awareness and the formation of theory of the mind, which is the ability to understand other minds by attributing mental states such as beliefs, desires and intentions to other people. The frontal cortex is also responsible for perspective

taking – one's ability to understand things from someone else's perspective. This is very important in the development of social cognition (Casey et al., 2008, p.112-116; Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006, 298-300). Much of the particular behaviours of adolescence are ascribed to the asynchrony of the earlier development of the limbic system and the delayed development of the prefrontal cortex (Casey et al., 2008, p. 116).

Adolescence is an important period during which personal, behavioural and environmental forces concur. It is also the developmental period in which a young person acquires independence (Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429). This process, and the behaviour associates with it, is not unique to the human species. Increased novelty-seeking and increased social interactions with other individuals of the same age can be observed in many other species as well (Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429). Risky behaviour among adolescents can be seen as the product of a biological imbalance between the search for change, diversion and new experiences ("sensation seeking") on the one hand, and on the other, immature self-regulatory capabilities in adolescents. The purpose of these two characteristics may be to enable adolescents to break away from the secure family environment. These risk-taking determinants ties in with the developmental tasks of adolescence (see the models of Erikson and Havighurst discussed in section 3.2.1.2 of this chapter). Konrad, (et al., 2013, p. 429) postulated that during the life-span of an individual, at specific times, the brain is sometimes better prepared for certain types of learning experiences. They argued that the cognitive style is optimally suited to the social development tasks facing adolescents, because it is especially sensitive to social-affective stimuli and flexible in the assignment of goal priorities. (Swanson in: Swanson et al., 2010, p. 94; Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429). Steinberg (2008, p. 7) ascribed the reward seeking/risk-taking behaviour of adolescents to changes in the dopamine circuitry in the brain.

Because dopamine plays a critical role in the brain's reward circuitry, the increase, reduction, and redistribution of dopamine receptor concentration around puberty, especially in projections from the limbic system to the prefrontal area, may have important implications for sensation seeking (Steinberg, 2008, p. 7).

Interaction with others may be significantly influenced by the adolescent's neurological development, because the dynamics of the interaction of the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex are involved – which may determine his/her responses to and understanding of the environment (Casey et al., 2008, pp. 111-118). It may co-determine the adolescent's understanding of him- or herself in relation to his or her social context and influence his/her ability to self-regulation and social competence. Research done by Casey et al. (2008, pp. 111-118) supported the notion that adolescent behaviour is influenced by the interaction between the limbic system and the prefrontal cortex. They reviewed evidence for the suggestion that behavioural changes during adolescence are emotional and incentive-driven (Fong, Caggiano, Bennett & Hommer, 2004, p. 1801; Bjork et al, 2004, pp. 1794-1794). They provided evidence in support of the neural mechanisms influencing these behaviour changes. These mechanisms rely on the dynamic interactions among the amygdala (part of the limbic system), ventral striatum, and prefrontal cortex. These authors advocated that typically-observed behavioural changes during adolescence may be associated with a heightened responsiveness to emotional cues, particularly those associated with incentives. This heightened responsiveness is mediated by limbic and striatal processes. In contrast, the capacity to effectively engage in cognitive and emotional regulation is relatively immature as indicated by the continued development of the prefrontal cortex. This might explain the sometimes erratic behaviour associated with adolescents (Casey et al., 2008, pp. 111-118), which may lead to increased vulnerability in this stage of life.

- **Vulnerability and the physiological development of the adolescent brain**

In the light of the literature I reviewed, it became clear that the order of physiological developmental processes may make an adolescent more vulnerable to the consequences of his/her own suboptimal decisions. The asynchrony of brain development may lead to adolescents making rash decisions, not always based on rational thinking, and therefore may lead to impulsive actions, which may involve high-risk behaviour. Casey et al. (2008, p.111) mentioned results from the 2005 National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (YRBS) conducted in the USA to show that adolescents engage in behaviours that increase their likelihood of death or illness by driving a vehicle after drinking or without a seat belt, carrying weapons, using illegal

substances, and engaging in unprotected sex resulting in unintended pregnancies and STDs, including HIV infection. Konrad et al., (2013, p. 425) mentioned that in Germany 62% of all deaths among persons aged 15 to 20 are due to traumatic injuries. The most common causes of death are motor vehicle accidents, other accidents, violence, and self-injury. The high mortality could be ascribed to drunk driving, driving without a seatbelt, carrying weapons, substance abuse, and unprotected sexual intercourse. Although these types of behaviour should improve with the maturation of the cortex, it is not always the case. Therefore one should not assume that the process is linear. A gradual improvement of behaviour might be expected with a decline of suboptimal choices towards adulthood.

This asynchrony in brain development during the adolescent phase may mimic the risk-taking behaviour, which is associated with fatalistic thoughts of, e.g., 'let's do it, nothing matters anyway' (Coleman & Hagell, 2007, p. 3-7). The asynchrony of brain development may also affect the mood of the individual. Several studies postulated fatalism as one mechanism that might contribute to increased vulnerability to depression (Benassi, Sweeny and Dufour, 1988; Neff and Hoppe 1993; as cited in Roberts et al., 2000, p.239). Consensus exists that fatalism increases the risk for adolescent depression by reducing "both the will and the ability to cope with the demands of life" (Roberts, et. al., 2000, p. 239). Roberts (et. al, 2000, p.240) noted that an examination of the literature on adolescent depression brought to light that fatalism is part of a larger group of possible causes that can involve dysfunction in many life domains. Roberts (et. al., 2000, p. 240) placed fatalism within the "negative spectrum (i.e. cognitions, emotions and behaviour)" and suggested that these are important concepts in the etiologic and natural history of adolescent depression. Lewinsohn (et. al, 1996; as cited in Roberts, et.al, 2000, p.240) postulated that these negative spectrum attributes are already present before the onset of episodes of depression, during the episodes and after the episodes subsided. Based on the research submitted, it seems likely that factors resorting under the negative spectrum may not only predispose adolescents to depression, but may also affect the duration of the depression. It may also influence the vulnerability to recurring episodes of depression. This therefore leads one to assume that fatalistic thinking may form part of a predisposition for adolescent depression (Roberts et al., 2000, p. 239).

The conclusions based on the results of the above-mentioned study are consistent with other findings (Herman-Stahl and Petersen, 1996; Hops et. al, 1990; Lewinsohn, et. al, 1996) that fatalism, as an aspect of negative attributional style, can be associated with increased risk for depression. Fatalism does not only appear to increase the risk for symptoms of mood disturbance, but also for serious symptoms of clinical depression (Roberts, et.al, 2000, p. 248). Vulnerability and the adolescent's regulation of social and self-regulatory competence may impact on psychosocial development.

### ***3.2.1.3 Psychosocial development***

The psychosocial development of the adolescent is discussed by means of the work of Erikson, an important psychosocial theorist. Where the constructivists focused on the socially constructed nature of knowledge and learning, psychosocial theorists such as Erikson placed the emphasis on the natural development of humans across their life-span (Donald et al., 2010, p. 61). A positive aspect of this theory is that it is not only concerned with the psychology of the child, but also the influence of the social context in which he/she develops, linking it to Bandura's emphasis on work in this respect. The social aspects of development may influence the cognitive development of the adolescent as he/she learns to understand the world in relationships with others. In addition, the adolescent may be influenced by what he/she observes socially in terms of the ability and motivation to learn and self-efficacy, or the lack thereof.

For all individuals, adolescence is a stage that introduces profound changes and significant adjustments. Firstly, it is a stage in which considerable transitions has to be made. Erikson defined eight stages of psychosocial development in a life span. These stages were defined according to people's progressively emerging emotional needs in interactions with expanding social relationships. Each stage is identified by a specific developmental challenge between two opposites that occur in a sequence at a given point in a person's life cycle. Each challenge is conquered in a way that corresponds with a person's personal experience and social context. Once a

challenge is met, it becomes a scaffold for moving into the next stage towards the next developmental challenge (Sokol, 2009, pp. 1-2; Donald et al., 2010, p. 62).

Sokol (2009, pp. 3-4) explicated how adolescence fits into Erikson's fifth stage – identity versus role confusion. Erikson argued that a strong sense of identity provides one with a deep sense of ideological commitment and guides one with a deeper understanding of one's place in the world. Erikson (1968) noted how identity creates a sense of well-being and gives direction to one's life. It also makes one aware that you are valued by those who are important to you (Sokol 2009, pp. 3-4). Erikson believed that having a solid sense of identity is crucial to further development. The primary challenge during the adolescent stage is for the learner to establish his or her identity; to answer the question: Who am I and what is my place in the world? (McAdams, Josselson & Lieblich, 2006, in Sokol, 2009, p. 4). Finding a route map for the future (Where am I going?) also seems important. During this stage, adolescents will try to separate themselves from the constraints of families and association with the peer group becomes increasingly important. Not only do they try to establish independence, but they also orientate themselves towards a future career, explore their sexual identity, establish their self-image and engage in more permanent and more significant friendships. Along with the question of personal identity goes the question of social identity (How do I connect with those around me?). The adolescent's sense of identity needs to integrate with the values and norms of society (McAdams, 2006, as cited in Sokol, 2009, p.4).

Part of the journey towards finding one's identity is experiencing extreme doubt regarding the meaning and purpose of one's existence, leading to a sense of loss and confusion (Sokol, 2009, pp. 3-4). Coleman and Hagell (2007, p. 3) mentioned that adolescents experience a feeling of anticipation of what is ahead as they journey towards adulthood. They often feel a sense of regret for the stage that has been lost as they leave the safety and protection of their childhood environment and become increasingly independent. A common emotion is anxiety about the future. Young people worry about the future in various ways. Getting a tertiary education and the potential of being unemployed all contribute to a feeling of anxiety. They must negotiate a major psychological readjustment in terms of shifts in family and peer-relationships. They also experience a degree of ambiguity of status during the



transition as they establish their identity between childhood and adulthood (Coleman & Hagell, 2007, p. 3). This is a process that fluctuates between certainty and confusion, until a balance is found from where the adolescent emerges with fidelity and self-belief, which he or she will take into the next developmental stage (Donald et al., 2010, pp. 64-65). The influence of the social context is crucial in the development of adolescents. Erikson believed that there is never a “point of no return” where someone cannot modify the way in which previous challenges were met. Erikson also suggested that each individual moves through the challenges with their own individual experience that he/she brought into the challenge. Adolescents will also move through this stage at their own pace (Donald et al., 2010, pp. 64-65).

The relevance of Erikson’s stages theory to cognitive development was aptly argued by Cote and Levine (2002, p. 4-6) when they described specific identity formation strategies for early adults, emphasising the effect on the *cognitive* strategies followed by the individual. In an attempt to explore the stage of early adulthood they developed categories they called “refusers, drifters, searchers, guardians and resolvers” (Cote & Levine, 2002, p. 5). For example: They described the “refuser” as a person who develops a series of cognitive defences that prevents him to progress into adulthood. These include a series of self-defeating cognitive schema that lock them into a child-like behaviour pattern which is characterised by depending on something or someone else. They were normally given little social structure as children and as adolescents they were given little guidance on how they could develop themselves intellectually, emotionally and vocationally. They have few personal resources with which to actively engage the community of adults and often sabotage their position by acting immaturely. Substance abuse or inappropriate emotional outbursts (temper tantrums) often mark their behaviour. They are often absorbed by street gangs where they can avoid the transition into responsible adulthood and overcoming social obstacles by legitimate means (Cote & Levine 2002, p. 5).

Havighurst (1973) described adolescence in terms of the concepts associated with the developmental tasks of adolescence. These were tabled as follows by Swanson (in: Swanson et al., 2010, p. 94).



**Table 3.1: Descriptions and concepts associated with developmental tasks during adolescence**

<b>Developmental tasks</b>	<b>General descriptions</b>	<b>Associated concepts</b>
Achieving more mature relations with both genders in their age group	Adolescents learn about reciprocity and relationship trust in their relationships with others.	Peer affiliations
Achieving a masculine or feminine social role	Adolescents develop an understanding of what it means to be male or female given their sex role expectations.	Gender identity
Accepting one's physique	Adolescents are able to accept their physical attributes, particularly given the physiological changes during early adolescence, which continue through adolescence (weight, muscle, height, sexual characteristics etc.)	Pubertal timing
Achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults	Adolescents examine and become responsible for their decisions.	Emerging adulthood
Preparing for marriage and/or family life	Adolescents learn how to establish close relationships in preparation for long-term adult relationships.	Intimacy
Preparing for an economic career	Adult status is associated with the ability to support oneself financially with career objectives and marketable skills helping prepare younger	Educational attainment

	adolescents for the transition.	
Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour – developing an ideology	Adolescents can think abstractly and hypothetically, developing the capacity for committing to a personal set of values and beliefs.	Spirituality
Desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour	Status in the community, beyond that of family is important as adolescents become financially and emotionally independent from parents.	Civic engagement

Swanson (in Swanson et al., 2010, p. 94) postulated that it is important to note that some of Havighurst's descriptions have undergone changes since its original conception. For instance, the development of a gendered social role would be much less salient now, as much has changed in how women are viewed in terms of equal opportunities, etc.

### 3.2.3 The experience of fatalism in adolescence

As one explores the possibility of fatalism in adolescents, the triadic reciprocal relationship (Bandura) becomes important once again as it formulates the relationship between the personal, behavioural and environmental influences in the lived experiences of adolescents. In the discussion of fatalism in adolescents, it is necessary to raise an important question: How do the traits and developmental tasks generally associated with adolescence potentially contribute to a person's vulnerability to possible fatalistic thinking? As indicated by the literature consulted, it is generally accepted that various uncertain states of mind are associated with the transient phase of adolescence, such as angst or anxiety, an insecure self-image, uncertainty about the future, a close association with peers and peer values and the taking of risks as they explore new horizons (Coleman & Hagell, 2007, p. 3).

As I have argued before, fatalism is generally associated with a state of mind that causes the individual to believe that he or she cannot change the outcome of a given situation or life experience. Given the general insecurity of adolescence, it could be a common experience for adolescents to feel anxious or insecure and struggle to find a way in which to resolve their current situation. Many of the indicators of fatalism seem to be part of the general emotional experience of adolescents (angst, etc.) and the behaviour typical of this stage of development (risk taking, association with a peer group, etc.). Indeed, everyone experiences a combination of these emotions and behaviours from time to time. But much may depend on how one copes with the emotions and behaviours generally associated with adolescence. In this regard Bandura et al (2003, pp. 769-780) underscored the relationship between self-efficacy to regulate positive and negative emotions and the presence of high efficacy to manage one's own academic development, to resist social pressures for antisocial activities and to engage oneself with empathy in others' emotional experiences. Compromised academic development, anti-social behaviour, and the lack of empathy with other's emotional experiences, could be associated with fatalistic thinking.

From the above it can be derived that the identification of specific attitudes or behaviour as fatalistic may pose a problem. Fatalistic attitudes (e.g., avoidance) and negative emotions (e.g., anxiety and hopelessness) may occur regularly in adolescence. In the normal flow of events, these fatalistic attitudes and emotions should, as the learning of new coping strategies take place, be followed by resilient attitudes and emotions (Yeager & Dweck, 2012, p. 303). Resilience can be defined as "good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development" (Yeager & Dweck, 2012, p. 303). In some cases resilient responses may not be present, which may indicate low self-efficacy or the inability to regulate one's own emotions in a given situation. It is at this point when fatalistic attitudes, thoughts and behaviour may develop that can be detrimental to the well-being of the adolescent. A detrimental effect may therefore be triggered when a person fails to learn resilient strategies, and instead, resort to other coping mechanisms that may include high-risk behaviour, passive coping strategies, overly close association with peers and peer values, etc. (Coleman & Hagell, 2007, pp. 3-7).

The importance of modelling in learning has already been discussed and the contribution from the social cognitive theory is noteworthy. One could now ask: How much of what the adolescent can master in terms of emotions and behaviour depends on the presence of a competent adult role model? Much of what an adolescent learns may depend on the presence of a competent role model as Bray (et al., 2010, p. 308) indicated. This would be a person who can step in to teach (model) specific skills on how to cope with emotional and behavioural challenges so typical of the developmental stage. The absence or presence of a positive role model may in fact prevent or cause fatalistic thoughts in adolescents as Bray et al. (2010, p. 308) indicated.

The term “high-risk behaviour” normally describes potentially harmful behaviour that adolescents might engage in, such as having unprotected sex, abusing substances such as alcohol or illegal drugs, or taking part in anti-social activities (Coleman and Hagell, 2007, p. 2). Adolescence is often described as a stage of great vulnerability. Adolescents often become the victims of adverse circumstances or engage in high-risk behaviour that may render themselves and others vulnerable (Coleman and Hagell, 2007, pp. 2-3). The possibility was strongly suggested by Bjork et al. (2004, p. 1801) and Steinberg (2008, p. 4) that adolescent vulnerability and risk-taking behaviour are related to uneven brain development in the adolescent phase where the limbic system matures before the prefrontal cortex. The immature prefrontal cortex may contribute to suboptimal decision making. Such decisions may result in high-risk behaviour.

### **3.3 SOCIAL DETERMINANTS IN ADOLESCENTS**

#### **3.3.1 Adolescent fatalism in the South African context**

Due to the lack of educational research literature on fatalism, this study was largely informed by the conceptualisation of fatalism as it occurred in medical research. A primary question that arose during the literature review is: How do these studies, which were predominantly done in the context of cancer in adult African American communities in the United States of America, inform this study of fatalism in adolescents in South Africa? Secondly one could ask: Can one credibly deduct certain trends from the American studies and use these as guidelines to stipulate new areas of investigation in the South African context?

Powe and Finnie (2003) cited Powe and Johnson (1995, p.116-119), who argued that existential angst and nihilism as universal phenomena seemed to collaborate to bring about fatalistic thinking. This became the premise upon which they based their assumption that fatalism is a universal construct. In line with their assumption, I accepted the universality of fatalism, which meant that certain trends gleaned from medical research could be applied to the investigation into fatalism in adolescents. Furthermore, cancer fatalism as a topic for research provided probably the most 'extreme' research field as the study subjects had to grapple with thoughts about their own mortality.

Cancer fatalism, as viewed by Powe and Johnson (1995, p. 120), is a situational manifestation of fatalism in which individuals may feel powerless in the face of cancer and may view a diagnosis of cancer as a struggle against insurmountable odds. The antecedents of cancer fatalism within this philosophical view are defined as fear, inevitability of death, pessimism, and predetermination (Powe and Finnie, 2003, p256).

It might have exacerbated the formation of a fatalistic mind-set when someone thought that, being diagnosed with cancer, would inevitably lead to death and there is nothing that one could do to improve the situation. To my own mind, extreme cases of fatalism can occur in any circumstance and not only in the face of a terminal disease. One situation cannot necessarily be deemed to yield more extreme incidences of fatalism than others. Cognitive processes with the same type of

extreme emotional values may occur in, for example, the medical field (e.g., terminal illnesses), as well as in the field of education in South Africa (e.g., deadly gang-related shooting near schools). When government has to close down schools because of gang-related shooting in the vicinity of the schools it probably has a significant influence on the emotional state of the learners.

### **3.3.2 Poverty**

Donald et al. (2010, p. 156 – 158) postulated that poverty has a profound effect on a child's ability to learn. They explained this in terms of a negative cycle of poverty and barriers to learning. It seems that children living in conditions of poverty are rendered more vulnerable than children who are not poor. There increased vulnerability could be connected with health risks and safety hazards, in particular to risks sprouting from malnutrition, disease, infections and injury that are children who are not poor. Many of these health and safety risks cause physical, cognitive, neurological, or sensory problems, that in turn, are likely to cause disabilities and learning difficulties (Donald et al., 2010, p. 156 – 158; 276).

This negative cycle is often reinforced through poor educational conditions, such as a poor physical learning environment, the unavailability of learning resources, insufficiently trained educators and inadequate educational support (Biersteker and Kvalsig, 2007, p. 162, as cited in Donald et al., 2010, p.157). This may impact on education and the adolescent's ability to make sound choices, coping skills and their likelihood to drop out of school.

Secondary effects that are associated with poverty are poor health conditions, inadequate housing, inadequate access to health services and poor parental education and information. This may produce parental or caregiver stress and put the children at risk in terms of their physical, neurological, cognitive, scholastic, emotional and social development. Other factors that specifically colour the South African landscape are the effect of HIV/AIDS on households where AIDS orphans become the caregivers of younger siblings or single adults have to take care of a large number of children (Meyer-Weitz, 2005, pp. 75-77, Bray et al., 2009, pp. 282-

285). Teenage pregnancy often compounds the effects of the poverty cycle (Bray, et. al., 2009, pp. 43, 142; Donald et al., 2010, p.158).

These arguments are remarkably consistent with that of Powe and Johnson (1995, p. 1355; Powe and Finnie, 2003, pp. 455-456): “Several factors, including poverty, decreased education and decreased cancer knowledge, are believed to influence cancer fatalism”. There is evidence that a fatalistic worldview is more prevalent among less affluent social groups. There may be a greater risk for emotional problems in those groups, because fatalistic thinking may be more prevalent thus members from these groups cope less effectively in dealing with comprehensive stressors induced by poverty (Roberts et al., 2000, pp.239-240).

One could argue that poverty may have an effect on the mind-sets of people. Their mind-sets may influence their rational decision-making processes. In South Africa, the effect of poverty on fatalism might be even more pronounced, because the poverty line in third world countries is considered to be much lower than in first world countries. The recent data from the World Bank (2008-2012), expressed as the amount of people earning less than \$1, 25 per day, reveals the fact that Sub-Saharan Africa is indeed the poorest of all.

**Table 3.2 Poverty headcount ratio at \$1.25 a day (PPP) (% of population)**

(<http://data.worldbank.org/topic/poverty>)

<b>East Asia &amp; Pacific</b>	14.3% 2008	
<b>Europe &amp; Central Asia</b>	0.5% 2008	
<b>Latin America &amp; Caribbean</b>	6.5% 2008	
<b>Middle East &amp; North Africa</b>	2.7% 2008	
<b>South Asia</b>	36.0% 2008	
<b>Sub-Saharan Africa</b>	47.5% 2008	

The gross national income (GNI) per capita (annual) in the United States is significantly higher than in South Africa. The World Bank statistics revealed that in 2011 the average American citizen earned US\$ 48,620 as opposed to US \$6.960 earned by the average South African citizen (<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD/countries/1W?display=map>).

These figures may indicate that poverty in South Africa may have an even greater

effect on the mind-set of the people living here. In other words, if research from a first-world country such as the United States of America found poverty to have a significant effect on the likelihood of people to acquire a fatalistic mind-set, the effect in a poorer country such as South-Africa may even be more pronounced.

### **3.3.3 Ethnicity and culture**

Powe (1995, p.1357) described ethnicity as one of the predictors of cancer fatalism. Both Caucasians and African Americans were involved in the study. Powe (1995) found along with Bloom, Hayes, Saunders and Flatt (1987) and Underwood (1992) that a significant difference in fatalism scores occurred between these groups. African Americans were significantly more fatalistic than their Caucasian counterparts. Culture was also indicated as an important predictor of fatalism, especially in terms of the prevalent religious views in society (Powe & Johnson, 1995, pp. 122-125). It does seem as if there is an aspect of cultural determination in terms of fatalist thinking, which may have to do with prevalent cultural and or religious views or beliefs within an ethnical group. Considering the large body of philosophical and theological literature regarding fatalism, the core beliefs that are operational in an individual may be culturally or religiously determined.

In proposing the hermeneutical model of fatalism, I have already attempted to indicate that fatalism might be seen as being underpinned by the two core beliefs of determinism and chance. These are often influenced by cultural or religious perceptions and realities related to the lived experiences of specific cultural groups (Powe & Johnson, 1995, pp. 122-125). The levels of fatalism will probably be determined by how strongly these core beliefs function in the cognitive processes of an individual and how they may be influenced by other beliefs (Shen et al., 2009, pp.1-22). However, it seems that fatalism is a universal phenomenon and can develop in various contexts. The literature reviewed suggested that fatalism is indeed possible in various contexts, because it has to do with the belief that any given situation is controlled either by an external force or by chance, and there is nothing one can do to change the outcome (Shen et al., 2009, pp.1-3). Fatalism may be viewed in various contexts as, for example, economic fatalism (Acevedo, 2005, pp. 77-79) - the belief that one cannot control one's economic reality or that it is



controlled by external forces), educational fatalism - one's beliefs about the possible outcomes of one's educational process or engagement (Yaeger and Dweck 2012, pp., 302-314), political fatalism - perceptions on whether one's political freedom is determined by external forces (Ncgobo, 1999, p. 141), etc. Suffice to say, the results of the research done in terms of the factors contributing to cancer fatalism, might possibly be generalised to all other variants of fatalism as they occur. This may justify the research of fatalism in adolescents, in all its variants, as well as the influence of fatalism on the educational attainment of the adolescent individual.

### **3.3.4 Gender**

The results in terms of gender from the studies in cancer fatalism were insignificant, because most of the populations investigated in the studies described by Powe and Finnie (2003, p. 458), were either entirely or predominantly female. However, some have suggested that fatalism in female populations may be slightly higher than in male populations (Powe and Finnie, 2003, p. 458).

In the South African context of fatalism in adolescents, there might be other factors influencing the way in which gender affects the development of fatalistic thinking in adolescents. Donald et al. (2010, p. 227) mentioned the research of Krug (et. al, 2002), Lazarus et al. (2009) and Abrahams et al. (2004) which postulated that gender violence, as an aspect of interpersonal violence, is a major problem in South African society. Gender-based violence refers to a wide range of offenses against women and girls and includes any number of behaviours that erodes and undermines the physical, sexual and emotional integrity of women. Donald et al. (2010, p. 228) made the following emphatic statement that might position fatalism as an influencing agent in gender violence:

While boys or men are often the perpetrators of this form of violence, it is important to realise that patterns of abusive behaviour between men and women are usually systemic in nature and therefore cyclical and dynamic, with the one 'feeding' the other. So, although women do not want to be treated aggressively or oppressively, they too can get caught up in the 'cycle of violence', often based on their belief that they 'don't deserve anything better'.

Such discourses also emanate from uncritical acceptance that that is just the way life is. The way in which social beliefs influence gender and gender roles may contribute to fatalism by creating fatalistic cognitive responses such as angst, resignation and mental defeat and a variety of associated behavioural responses. Dupree, (2010, p. 76) postulated that, although not necessarily discussed in terms of cognitive development or learning, exposure to violence is associated with cognitive symptoms and arguably has implications for the development of cognitive schemes (see section 3.3.1) that influence how youth make meaning and respond to exposure to violence. There is, in essence, implicit learning involved in action or behaviour schemes.

### **3.3.5 Education**

In a recent study, Botha (2013) argued for a strong relation between educational attainment and general life satisfaction in South Africa. He explored the various dynamics in the relationship between life satisfaction and education in South Africa using the 2008 National Income Dynamics Survey and noted a positive association between educational attainment and individual satisfaction with life. This argument seemed to be true about both the men and women in the overall sample. It seemed less significant in the Asian and white samples, but the positive relationship held for black and coloured individuals. It seemed evident that education is a positional good. People who have attained more than the mean level of education in their relevant cluster were significantly more satisfied with life compared to those possessing less than the mean education (Botha, 2013, p.12). According to these findings it seems that educational attainment may play an important role in how people feel about life in general. This may cause them to think and respond more positively to others and the environment. The question that needs further research is whether or not lower levels of education may pertain to lesser levels of general satisfaction about life.

Studies in the United States in the field of cancer fatalism did reveal a possible relationship between lower levels of education and fatalism. The results in various studies, for example the studies mentioned by Powe and Finnie (2003. pp. 458-459) indicated a lack of education or low education as a significant contributing factor in

cancer fatalism (Straughan and Seow, 1998, Mayo, et. al. (2001; Conrad, et. al., (1996), Chavez, et. al., (1997) and Powe, (1995; 2001). The results of these studies indicated a significant relationship between cancer fatalism and low education.

These two studies (Botha, 2013 and Powe & Finnie, 2003) may lead one to assume that adolescents with lower levels of education may be less satisfied with life and therefore more prone to fatalistic thinking than those with higher levels of education. Dropping out of school may very well be catastrophic because it diminish their prospects for employment and sever them from an environment in which they could have acquired better coping skills and had the opportunity for emotional and intellectual growth.

### **3.4 BEHAVIOURAL DETERMINANTS IN ADOLESCENTS**

#### **3.4.1 Adolescent fatalism as a possible barrier to educational attainment**

Havighurst (1973) identified educational attainment as one of the development tasks that should be successfully completed during the adolescent stage. The aim thereof is preparing oneself for an economic career to be able to sustain oneself economically in adulthood (Swanson, 2010, p. 94). Biddlecom et al. (2008; as cited in Donald et al, 2010, p. 174) noted that the dropping out of school is a major issue for many learners in Southern Africa. School dropout and reasons associated with the phenomenon seem to be very complex. This research study is particularly concerned with the causes, because it may be closely associated with some of the factors underpinning fatalism, and may be the end-result of a process of fatalistic thinking. According to a study by Grant and Hallman (2006, pp. 2-10) and Chisholm (2004, p. 1-22) there are a number of causes for dropping out of school such as poverty, teenage pregnancy, educational attainment, the lack of supervision by parents or care-givers etc.

### **3.4.1.1 *The role of economic causes***

In chapter two I referred to the crucial role of poverty in cancer fatalism indicated by Powe (1995), Powe and Finnie (2003). If one assumes that poverty could be a key factor emerging from the perceived reality or lived experience of adolescents, it could definitely be a major cause of adolescent fatalism in South Africa. Grant and Hallman (2006, pp. 2-10) and Donald et al. (2010, p. 174) mentioned a number of direct and indirect economic causes. Often parents simply cannot afford the costs of schooling. In other cases, there is the expectation that the child must help to support the household, which means that he or she will drop out of school early to earn money, or to take on other family and social responsibilities. Fleisch, Shindler and Perry (2008, cited in Donald et al., 2010, p. 175) referred to the rise in AIDS orphans and child-headed households, which also contributes to the high drop-out rate.

### **3.4.1.2 *The role of educational levels***

Various research studies, mentioned by Powe and Finnie (2003 – see 2.2.3), postulated that fatalism was higher in populations indicating a low level of education. Donald et al. (2010, p. 175) contended that the manner in which people regard the usefulness and relevance of schooling, affects if, and for how long, they will stay in school. “Especially in disadvantaged contexts, parents/caregivers generally see education as one of the few ways of improving their children’s social and economic position” (Donald et al., 2010, p. 175). However, many children still disengage from their formal process of education after the initial stages because of a conflict with economic expectations and social demands (Biersteker & Robinson, 2000, p. 38; Dieltiens & Meny-Gilbert, 2009, pp. 48-49; as cited in Donald et al., 2010, p. 175). This research study is concerned with the manner in which educational fatalism might contribute to this form of school dropout, for example, a child may be thinking, “I am poor and staying in school is not going to improve my position.” Poverty, as an external locus of control, might direct the child’s thoughts in a fatalistic manner away from finishing school.

### **3.4.1.3 *The influence of the lack of parental/caregiver supervision***

In South Africa, unsupervised children might be categorised as follows:

- the group who lives in the home of a parent or caretaker, but is unsupervised for most of the day and left to their own devices, with little or no emotional support (the latchkey situation);
- the group who maintains contact with a household, but lives on the streets without any supervision;
- the group who has no or very limited contact with a household and live on the streets without any supervision (Venter and Rambau, 2011, pp. 345-356).

I prefer the term 'unsupervised children' instead of the more demeaning term 'street children,' which exclude the first category and only partially include the second. "Homeless children" is also a confusing term, because many children living on the streets have contact with their biological or caretaking families, but prefer to live on the streets. The reasons behind the lack of supervision are legion, but are usually associated with economic, social, emotional and educational causes, which are all related to poverty and environmental disadvantages (Venter and Rambau, 2011, pp. 345-356). In a study about the relation between teenage pregnancy and dropping out of school Grant and Hallman (2006, p.12) observed that the risk for young girls of either becoming pregnant or dropping out of school declines radically as the educational attainment of the household head increases.

Another reason for the increase in the school drop-out rate because of teenage pregnancies is a lack of supervision by the head of the household. The problem of unsupervised children has been described as follows by Venter and Rambau (2011, p. 235):

The after-school hours alone at home can be very risky for children living in low income, dangerous, or disadvantaged environments. Children being left alone for more than three hours often present with low self-esteem, low academic efficacy and high levels of depression. They are often not well adjusted and sometimes present with behavioural problems.

It is evident that being in a latchkey situation has an impact on children's scholastic progress and attainment. Children's homework is affected, because

they are unsupervised and if there is no one to provide supervision after school, the homework is not done. Some children are exhausted, by the time their parents arrive home. Problems with homework may often lead to strained relationships with educators (Venter and Rambau, 2011, p. 253). This may in turn lead to emotional problems such as self-esteem and indeed, fatalistic thinking. Fatalism might be associated with the fact that unsupervised children often drop out of school, especially when a child perceives his or her educational involvement as irrelevant to his or her survival.

### 3.5 CONCLUSION

At this stage of the research, I immersed myself in the hermeneutical process of meaning making (*verstehen*) - a process which I have conceptualised as a hermeneutical process involving myself, as well as the research participants (See Figure. 4.1 – the hermeneutical spiral.) I reached the point where I understood my own position as researcher as research instrument in relation to the research process and participants. With the vast and extremely diverse body of literature reviewed, I conceptualised adolescent fatalism as follows: Fatalism appears to be a cognitive construct that may not be unique to adolescence. It also seems to occur as a natural phenomenon of adolescence, possibly governed by a triad of reciprocal influences: The adolescent, with specific cognitive abilities, physical characteristics, beliefs and attitudes; the environment with specific physical surroundings, family and friends and other social influences such as culture; behaviour, including motor responses, verbal responses and decision making.

I reached the stage where I had to answer the research questions of this inquiry by means of a specific research method that I described in chapter four.

## CHAPTER 4

### DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE INQUIRY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

All research is interpretative and is directed by the researchers' worldview – “his set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.22). In response to the above, I have decided to position this study within the parameters of the interpretive paradigm, believing it to be the most apt framework for the empirical part of this investigation into fatalism in adolescents. I have done so, being aware of how my own beliefs and academic viewpoint may influence the study.

The research plan of the study have been explained and discussed and particular attention has been paid to the third and fourth phases of the research plan as introduced in chapter one. Exploration of the third phase in this chapter refers to the research paradigm and design chosen for the study. The fourth phase indicates the methodology and methods of data collection and analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). In this chapter, I have also reflected on the inherent worth of the study in terms of its quality and trustworthiness, rendering it defensible in all aspects. I have also presented the ethical considerations for this study.

The research plan for this inquiry has been as follows: I have explored the phenomenon of adolescent fatalism in South Africa by conducting an extensive literature search and review, supported and supplemented by field research in a naturalistic environment. The concepts emerging from the literature review and the data collected from the field research were brought together to conceptualise and describe the phenomenon of adolescent fatalism in Adolescents in an adequate way. Throughout the inquiry process I endeavoured to answer the following questions:

- What are the possible manifestations of fatalism in adolescents?
- How does fatalism possibly colour their lived experiences?

- How does adolescent fatalism possibly affect educational attainment in adolescents?

## 4.2 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

Guba (1990, p.17) postulated that paradigm is a basic set of beliefs that guides the actions of the researcher. In order to postulate a well-motivated research design, defining the research paradigm is essential. The aim of this research has been to inquire into the nature of fatalism, describing the phenomenon in adolescents, as well as how it manifests in their lived experiences, and possibly pertains to their educational attainment. I chose an interpretative research paradigm for this research study, which served as the bedrock on which the methodological principle of *verstehen* (the construction of inter-subjective meaning) has been employed, emphasising human experience and its interpretation.

Research paradigms consist of beliefs, assumptions, values and the aims of social inquiry. These elements of paradigms include the self, society and human agency and are also constitutive of a specific ontology, namely the nature of reality (Crotty, 1998, in Merriam, 2002, p. 10), a specific epistemology which describes how we come to know reality (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 7), a specific axiology (the values of the paradigm) and methodology (the method of the paradigm) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 22)). Researchers' differing ontological and epistemological positions often lead to a variety of research attitudes (values and methods) towards the same phenomenon (Grix, 2004, p. 64). I discussed the particular beliefs, assumptions, values and aims of the interpretive paradigm in the following section.

### 4.2.1 Beliefs

Garrick (1999, in Henning, et al., 2004) postulated the fundamental assumptions of the interpretive paradigm as follows: Firstly, individuals are not passive vehicles in social, political and historical affairs, but possess inner capabilities, which can allow for individual judgments, perceptions and decision-making autonomy (agency). Secondly, the interpretive researcher believes that any event of action is explainable in terms of multiple interacting factors, events and processes. Thirdly, the



interpretive researcher acknowledges the extreme difficulty in attaining complete objectivity, especially in observing human subjects, because they confuse and make sense of events based on their own individual system of meaning (Garrick (1999. p. 149); Denzin, 2010, p. 271). Fourthly, the interpretive inquirer strives to cultivate an understanding of individual cases, rather than universal laws or predictive generalizations. However, the findings can be expanded logically and can be used to cast more light on other contexts. Fifthly, the interpretive researcher believes that the world is made up of multifaceted realities that are best studied as a whole, while still recognizing the significance of the context in which the experience occurs. Lastly, the interpretive inquirer understands that inquiry is always value laden, and that such values inevitably influence the framing, focusing and execution of research. These assumptions ground all the different elements of this research study (Garrick, 1999. p. 149).

#### **4.2.2 Ontology and Epistemology**

Ontologically, the interpretive paradigm rejects the existence of an objective reality which functions independently of the frame of reference of the observer (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 271) . Instead, reality depends on the subjective observation and interpretation of experiences from his own perspective. Every step of the process is interpretive. The researcher becomes part of the research process and is the primary research instrument. He begins the inquiry and subjectively influences the process until the end (Henning et al., 2004, p. 22). I have been aware of the fact that as the researcher, I am the subjective interpreter of the data and the ‘maker of meaning’ and that my endeavours will bear the watermark of my own worldview and philosophy. I also recognize that people’s behaviour is the product of how they interpret their worlds, and is not linked to an external objective truth. It is rather socially constructed, as human beings interpret and give meaning to their lived experiences and their interactions with their world (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). As an interpretive researcher I should not view people in isolation, but focus on the relationship between the various systems in which they live and how it is understood (Holloway, 1997, p.20).

Epistemologically the interpretive researcher understands that observation is fallible and has error and that all theory can be revised. Contrary to the positivist view, the interpretative researcher does not aim to discover absolute truth, but believes that science can only give us an approximation of the truth (Suter, 2012, p. 34; Holloway, 1997, pp. 19-20). The interpretative researcher believes that the goal of science is to always aim at accounting for reality, or multiple realities, even if it can never be fully attained. Interpretative research is comfortable with uncertainty in results. Holloway (1997, p. 20) introduced Popper's notion (1963) of deduction by falsification as an important way in which to view data generation within the interpretative paradigm. Because measurement is fallible, the interpretative researcher employs varieties of data sources and methods of analysis in order to strive for validity. According to the interpretivist paradigm, different perspectives on reality do not imply relativism, but rather enrich our understanding of the world by different processes of observation (Suter, 2012, p. 344). Multiple perspectives may yield a better understanding of a phenomenon (Holloway, 1997, .p. 20).

Interpretive research fundamentally investigates meaning and wants to understand people's definitions and understanding of own perceptions and experiences. Interpretative researchers also claim that the experiences of people are essentially context-bound and not free from time, location or the mind of the human actor. Researchers must understand the socially constructed nature of the social world and realise that values and interests become part of the research process (Holloway, 1997, p.93; Suter, 2012, p. 344).

One can conclude that the epistemology of the interpretative paradigm entails that the results of the research should be accepted to be tentative, but valid, based on the study of different sources (Holloway, 1997, pp. 19-20). It focuses on how people make meaning in their individual circumstances (Merriam, 2009, p. 13). It emphasizes an interdependent relationship between the researcher and the research participants. Interpretive research values the unspoken knowledge and values of people in the research process (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 3).

Holloway (1997, p. 93) postulated that the interpretivist paradigm can be linked to Weber's *Verstehen* approach (Audi, 1995, p. 849). Weber believed that social

scientists should be concerned with the interpretive understanding of human beings. Additionally, Weber argued that ‘understanding’ in the social sciences is inherently different from ‘explanation’ in the natural sciences, as was argued by the exponents of positivism (Audi, 1995, p. 849). He discriminated between the nomothetic, rule-governed methods of positivism and the idiographic methods focusing on individual cases. These individual cases should not be linked to the general laws of nature, but to the thinking, feeling and behaviour of human beings. Weber also emphasised the qualitative nature of social science. He advised that the participants in social science research should not be treated as objects of scientific research, but as human beings embedded into their own contexts and lived experiences. As researchers, we can only try to gain access to them and their worlds by listening to them and observing them (Holloway, 1997, p. 93).

Weber’s approach is firmly based on the trends and principles of hermeneutics, a method by which the researcher and the research participants, with their own world views, value systems and lived experiences, become part of the research process. Hermeneutics allows one to view the phenomenon of what is being researched in the light of the context and lived experiences of the researcher and the research participants.

#### ***4.2.2.1 Understanding in hermeneutics***

In chapter 2.3 I have emphasised the fact that my inquiry into fatalism in adolescents have been guided by the philosophical idea of hermeneutics, as exposed by Kant, Schleiermacher, Heidegger and Gadamer. The word “hermeneutics” has its origins in the Greek *hermeneuein*: to interpret, and derives from the Greek god Hermes, the messenger of the gods, who made the unknowable knowable through the invention of language and writing (Freeman in: Given, 2008, p. 385). Originally, the term “hermeneutics” referred to the study and interpretation of biblical and sacred texts (Freeman in Given, 2008, p.386).

Hermeneutics originally developed from Immanuel Kant’s idea that what we know is not based on an “uninterpreted or a-theoretical world of knowledge” (Freeman in Given, 2008, p.286). Instead, the human mind actively makes sense of the world

based on existing conceptual frameworks. This idea of interpretation was expanded by Friedrich Schleiermacher, who argued that understanding and interpreting are naturally occurring abilities, but also inabilities. He assumed that people do not always understand correctly and sometimes need guidance (Freeman in Given, 2008, p. 386).

From Schleiermacher's ideas of understanding, contemporary hermeneutics developed. Contemporary hermeneutics consists of various approaches that are all concerned with the processes through which understanding and interpretation occur, the credibility of interpretative statements and the conditions for new understanding (Freeman in Given, 2008, p. 386). Because of the contributions of various philosophers, including Heidegger and Gadamer, the term is now defined as "the theory and practice of interpretation and understanding (*Verstehen*) in different kinds of human contexts" (Wilcke, 2002, p.3).

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Husserl's student, introduced hermeneutics into the study of phenomena since he believed that pure description as proposed by Husserl, was limited in its ability to reveal meaning (Wilcke, 2002, p.2). Husserl proposed that the researcher should clearly identify all beliefs, assumptions and pre-conceived notions regarding the phenomena to be studied, describe them, and then set them aside or "bracket" them (Beck, 1994 in: Wilcke, 2002, p. 2). Husserl suggested this approach to prevent the beliefs and pre-conceived ideas of the researcher to influence the research. Heidegger, on the other hand, argued that to be human is to always be in the midst of a situation that is constantly in flux. He emphasised the importance of the "experience of the experience" (Freeman in Given, 2008, p. 387). In terms of the relation between the researcher and his research, it means that the researcher, with his beliefs or pre-conceived ideas, becomes part of the research process as much as the research participants.

Building on the work of Husserl and Heidegger, as well as other phenomenologists, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1997) developed his own approach to the process of understanding. He emphasised the importance of language in shaping both our experience and our interpretations. The language we use awakens the voices of other people as they express themselves, or do not express themselves in response

to us (Freeman in Given, 2008, p. 387). Understanding manifests in the interplay between one's perspectives on the world (traditions) and that which one's current situation evokes in one. Gadamer emphasises understanding as dialogue. In terms of doing interpretive research, it means that the researcher should be paying attention to words used in the process of writing the text, examining their origins and permutations in order to explore underlying meanings that might illuminate understanding (Wilcke, 2002, p.3).

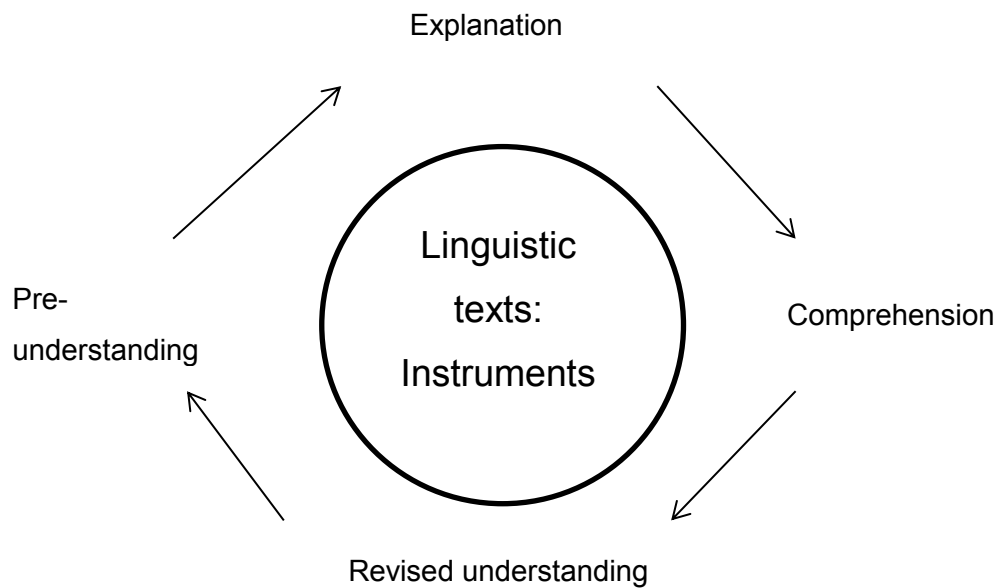
Hermeneutics is important in qualitative research as it challenges "both the aim of social science and its reliance on a narrow conception of understanding encouraged by scientific methods" (Freeman in Given, 2008, p.388). It shifts the focus of inquiry from seeking to understand something or someone to "engaging with the dynamic and historically situated nature of human understanding" (Freeman in Given, 2008, p.388). Research (and the researcher) therefore becomes part of what is being researched and should be accounted for in the final analysis.

#### **4.2.2.2 A hermeneutical model for the understanding of fatalism**

In order to conceptualise this inquiry into adolescent fatalism, I had to approach it from two perspectives. Firstly I had to focus on the process of *verstehen* on the side of the researcher, i.e. how he makes meaning by integrating the research paradigm and method with the research data. Secondly I had to focus on the way in which the participants made meaning by integrating their interaction with the researcher and the research process with their lived experiences. In both instances a unique process of understanding takes place.

Max Weber's approached the study of human beings as an interpretive process (*verstehen*). He argued that social scientists should be concerned with the interpretive understanding of human beings by gaining access to their experiences. He emphasised the interpretive nature of human meaning-making in research (Holloway, 1997, p. 93). However, in the research process, the researcher is not the only meaning maker. The research participants are also interpreting the presentation of the research process to them and how it relates to their lived experiences. In practice, it means that the researcher is going to make meaning out

of the data as it is presented by the participants according to his own frame of reference. In the same way, the participants are making meaning out of what the researcher presents to them as stimuli to evoke them to recall, and give account of, their own lived experiences. To create a link between these two processes of understanding, I used Heidegger's hermeneutical circle to explain the notion of *verstehen* in the context of this research. I would like to refer back to chapter 2.3 where I began to postulate the use of Heidegger's hermeneutical circle as a template for *verstehen* (Jervolino, 1990, p. 23). I argued that the hermeneutical process entails the understanding of the research phenomenon by the researcher while he is interacting with the research participants and the research data. Heidegger's hermeneutical circle relates to Weber's idea of interpretation by gaining access to the experiences of individuals. Both the researcher and the research participants will enter the process with their own world views and pre-understanding of the research phenomenon or aspects thereof. The researcher will create and present linguistic tools to the participants that will introduce them to the research phenomenon and encourage them to recall related events in their own lived experiences. Mainly through the medium of language, but also through non-verbal communication such as symbols, the research participants will create data by recalling and interpreting their own lived experiences. This data, in turn, will explain the research phenomenon to the researcher and lead him to a new understanding (comprehension) of the data. This new understanding will help him to review and enrich his understanding of the phenomenon prior to the process of inquiry. Thus the hermeneutical circle is completed. Understanding, however, is a continuous circle of coding and decoding of information as the research researcher and the research participants come to a specific understanding of events in their own minds. I tried to illustrate Heidegger's hermeneutical circle ((Jervolino, 1990, p. 23) in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1 The hermeneutical circle** (Adapted from <http://thuongnguyen1.wordpress.com/>)

An eventual understanding of adolescent fatalism might then be construed from the researcher's and the research participants' understanding of the phenomenon. This will inevitably have a close bearing on the research methodology I have employed. To construct this model I used a hermeneutical process (Audi, 1995, p. 323), including a variety of interactive factors that may collaborate in the understanding of fatalism: *Verstehen* as the self-awareness of the researcher in relation to the research process and participants (1); *verstehen* as conceptualisation of the phenomenon (2); *verstehen* as the researcher understands his departure into and progress in making meaning (3); and *verstehen* as the research participants' understanding of their own lived experiences during the research process (4).

The texts created during the research process became important as they represented both the researcher's process of meaning making in presenting the research process, as well as the recollection of the participant's lived experiences in the form of data. Weber supported Heidegger's approach to the hermeneutic process by arguing that, texts, and the people who produce them, cannot be studied using the same scientific methods as the natural sciences (Holloway, 1997, p.93). Supporters of Heidegger's approach also claim that such texts are conventionalized

expressions of the experience of the author; thus, the interpretation of such texts will reveal something about the social context in which they were formed, but, more significantly, provide the reader with a means to share the experiences of the author. The reciprocity between text and context is part of what Heidegger called the hermeneutic circle (Figure 4.1). Heidegger chose to view the hermeneutical process as a circular instead of a linear process, because according to him, the various elements contributing to the process are reciprocal (Jervolino, 1990, p. 23).

I chose to describe fatalism and its underpinnings in terms of the hermeneutical process for the following reasons. Firstly, the ontology of understanding is implied in the methodology of interpretation. This research, situated in the interpretative paradigm, aims to understand and interpret social and psychological phenomena that may be constitutive in a mind-set called fatalism. Secondly, hermeneutics is an apt approach to interpret the text in this study. Text, in this instance, alludes to more than the written texts associated with this research process. During the 20th century, the notion of “text” in hermeneutics was expanded from written texts to also include the context and co-texts of the history of human behaviour (Jervolino, 1990, p. 20-21). After considering the various voices heard in the literature review, I proposed to understand fatalism as the result of specific hermeneutical processes that take place in the mind of the researcher, as well as in the minds of the research participants. Thus, this inquiry into adolescent fatalism included the lived experience of the researcher as well as the lived experiences of the research participants.

During this inquiry, the lived experiences of the researcher and the research participants became intertwined with one another by their proximity to one another in time, place (location) and communication during the process of inquiry. This ‘situatedness’ of research creates the context for the hermeneutical process that strives towards an understanding of the phenomenon (Heidegger, 1995; in Smythe, Ironside, Sims, Swenson, and Spence., 2008, p. 1391). Smythe et al. (2008, p. 1391) argued that the hermeneutical process encompasses the researcher’s understanding of all the processes, dialogues and encounters that shapes his understanding. This can be related to Heidegger’s understanding of the ‘situatedness’ of research (Heidegger, 1995; in Smythe et al., 2008, p. 1391). Smythe et al. (2008, p. 1391) suggested that research is a complex and layered



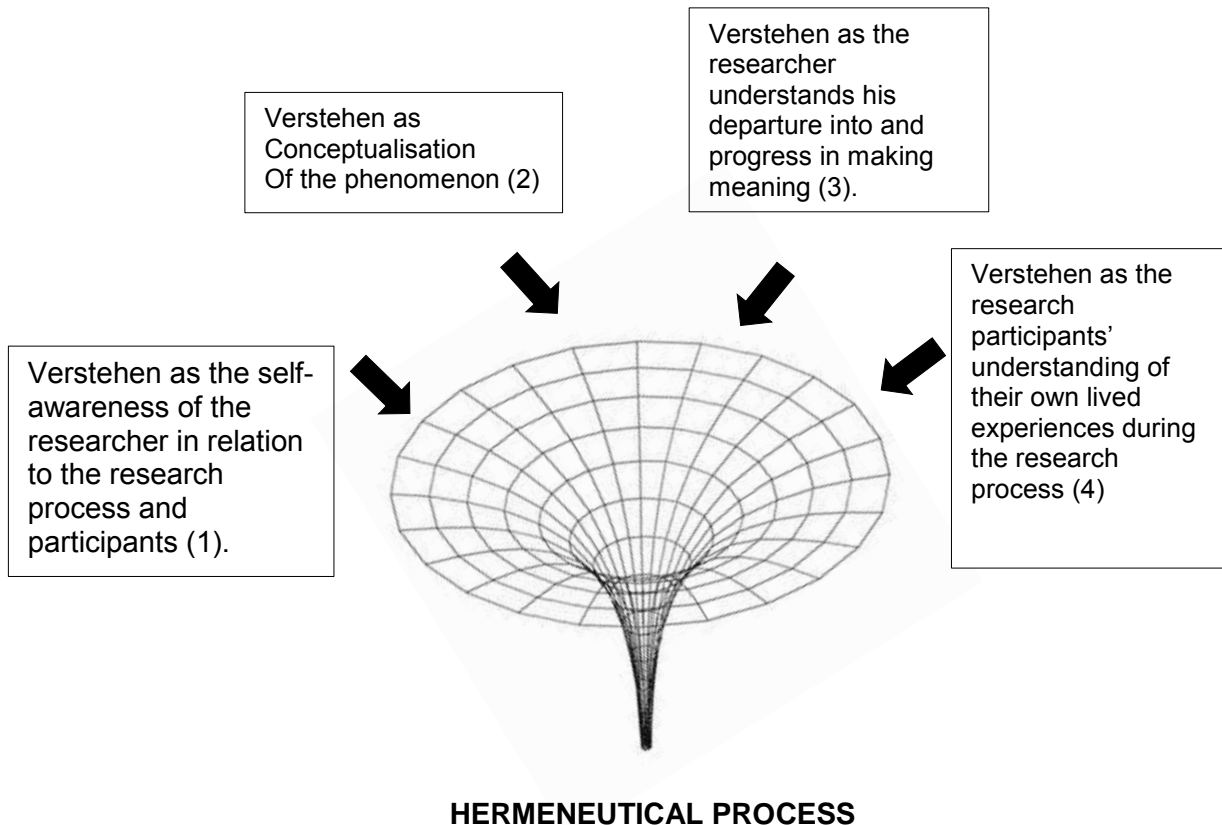
process, not leading to clear-cut 'yes' and 'no' answers, but rather to 'tentative suggestions, hints and possibilities'. Therefore, I have attempted this inquiry into adolescent fatalism as a layered process, being played out on four different tiers or levels that speak to one another.

It may be important at this stage to give a bird's eye view of this research inquiry as an encompassing hermeneutical process that would enable the researcher to attain a better understanding of the phenomenon of adolescent fatalism. As researcher, I became aware of fatalism as a research phenomenon in the medical field that was associated with certain cognitive, behavioural and emotional traits. These traits appeared to be influencing the choices that individuals make, thus influencing their behaviour. As I am working with adolescents, these research findings inspired a personal reflection on how fatalism would play out in the lives of adolescents in South Africa and if and how it would influence their choices and behaviour, as well as their academic attainment. The formulation of the research questions led to an extensive and intensive investigation of the phenomenon in the literature. This was essentially a hermeneutical process as I engaged with the literature in order to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of adolescent fatalism. During this process I basically assimilated the opinions and meanings that other researchers attached to the phenomenon with my own process of understanding. By means of the literature review I was able to draw some conclusions about the phenomenon. The hermeneutical process that I followed in this inquiry can be explained as a four-tiered model. The first three tiers involve my own understanding as researcher.

On the first tier, understanding (*verstehen*) takes place as the researcher discovers his own relationship with the research process. In this process he would determine his own reason behind the inquiry and formulate his own pre-understanding of the phenomenon. On the second tier, the researcher gradually conceptualises the research phenomenon of fatalism and grows into a better understanding of its nature and characteristics. The review of relevant literature could be part of this process. A third tier of *verstehen* represents the researcher's own understanding of his own departure into making meaning of the phenomenon and the reasons he discovers for his own interpretation of the various dimensions of the phenomenon. This tier could represent the interpretation and discussion of the data.

The fourth hermeneutical tier of *verstehen* refers to the research participants' understanding of their own lived experiences, represented, amongst other things, by their personal beliefs about fatalism and/or its various dimensions. The fourth tier may also include the research participants' interactions with other factors that may influence their final understanding of the research phenomenon and expression thereof during the research process. This aspect of understanding may often be concealed from the researcher and only partially revealed through what the research participant is willing to expose in text, depending on his or her relationship with the research process and the researcher. This tier would be represented in my exploration of adolescent fatalism as it manifests within the world of the adolescent participants who find themselves in diverse school settings. I anticipated that the research participants would respond to my research input (methods of data collection) from their individually unique lived experiences by producing rich data.

The hermeneutical spiral (Figure. 4.1) brings to mind a forward-moving process, integrating various elements within its field of gravity into a whole in which the elements cannot always be clearly defined, although they play an active part in the process and have a reciprocal influence. In my view, this is exactly what happens during the hermeneutical process – the four hermeneutical tiers of *verstehen* feeds into the very dynamic hermeneutical spiral. A comprehensive literature review as part of a hermeneutical process of reading should have covered all four tiers of the hermeneutical process in this inquiry. The literature reviewed in this inquiry has been drawn into this expansive process of understanding, illuminating the first three tiers of the hermeneutical process. A literary review of the fourth tier of the hermeneutical process pertains to the lived experiences and fields of reference of the research participants as major influences in the research process. As they interacted with the researcher, they did so from their own frames of reference and experience as they try to make meaning of what the researcher presented to them. How the four tiers of *verstehen* feed into the larger hermeneutical process is illustrated in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2 Factors feeding into the hermeneutical process**

At this point it became evident that, what would be revealed during the course of the research, would be greatly determined by the revelation of information on the fourth tier of the process of understanding and interpretation – the personal experience of the individual in which the research phenomenon of adolescent fatalism may exist. The presentation of the literature survey was guided in particular by social cognitive theory and it served as a lens through which the research topic (adolescent fatalism) has been investigated.

### 4.2.3 Axiology

Axiology - one's ethical position within a paradigm - has to do with the question: "How can I be a moral person in the world?" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b, p. 183). It is important that the ethical approach within the research inquiry is sound. The researcher should choose his paradigm with a specific ethical approach in mind that will serve the purpose of the inquiry, in other words, questions should be asked

about what can be considered to be ethical or moral behaviour in the context of the research. This will shed light on how the research can uphold the values of social justice and the maintenance of human rights (Mertens et al., 2009, p. 88). Guba and Lincoln (2005, p. 200) mentioned the "...embeddedness of ethics within, not external to, paradigms". Each paradigm carries its own axiology, for example, the interpretive paradigm strives to produce descriptive analyses that emphasise deep, interpretive understanding of social phenomena – rather than to search for broadly applicable laws and rules. It values the complex understanding of unique realities of people - which means, to gain a deep understanding of how people think and the ways in which it colours their lived experiences, in the context of their unique environments, contexts and background or their "*Zits im Leben*<sup>11</sup>." (Henning et al., 2004, p. 22).

In terms of this research study, the axiology of the inquiry meant that I had to immerse myself into the thoughts, values and beliefs of the research participants. I also had to be alert to their social context and the various environmental influences that may influence their thinking and behaviour. An inquiry of this nature in South Africa should be done with extreme social awareness and sensitivity for cultural variety and various social discourses among the participants. I also needed to be sensitive to intercultural perceptions and stereotypes that may exist and could influence the interaction between the researcher and research participants, as well as between the participants themselves.

Additionally I had to be aware of how the difference in age between me and the participants may influence their responses. The difference in background and level of education may in some cases also have played a part. It was important in the context of the inquiry to establish an initial relationship of trust between myself and the participants before we could meaningfully engage with the research process. I have done this by introductory conversations and by visiting the school, engaging with the learners at least once before the commencement of the first stage of the data collection.

---

<sup>11</sup> *Zits im Leben* (German) – this generally refers to a person's setting or place in life; the way he or she is embedded in his/her environment and social context.

I have adopted the approach of empathetic neutrality in my inquiry. Neutrality means that I refrained from trying to prove a specific perspective or manipulate the data to arrive at predisposed truths. Neutrality suggests a non-judgemental stance towards the thoughts, emotions and behaviours of the participants (Patton, 2002, p. 52). Empathy describes a stance or approach toward the people one encounters – it communicates understanding, interest and caring (Patton, 2002, p. 52).

#### **4.2.4 Methodology**

Because of its emphasis on constructed or intentional reality, as it is concerned with the discovery of the multiple perspectives of all the layers in a social setting, a qualitative research methodology is an appropriate method within the interpretivist paradigm. By employing a qualitative methodology within the framework of an interpretivist paradigm participants are enabled to vocalise their lived experiences in terms of their varied experiences in their social contexts (Henning et al., 2004, p. 22). Interpretivist researchers assume that knowledge is gathered from social constructions, or at least viewed through the different lenses presented by these social constructions. These may include elements such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents and other artefacts. Interpretivist research tries to understand the phenomena that are being researched by the different meanings people attach to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; as cited in Richardson, 1996, p. 25). Therefore, one can say that the interpretive method is dependent on the stories people tell and how they reproduce their experiences in language. Researchers are not divorced from the phenomenon under study. Language in itself is context-bound and depends on the researcher's, as well as the informants' values and social locations. This implies reflexivity on the part of researcher; he or she must take into account own positioning in the setting as he or she is the main research tool (Holloway, 1997, p.93). Suter (2012, p. 345), noted that "the qualitative researcher often is the instrument, relying on his or her skills to receive information in natural contexts and uncover its meaning by descriptive, exploratory, or explanatory procedures". Interpretative research will be done in a naturalistic environment, which suggests that an interpretative dialogue between the researcher and the participants in their natural contexts might become a directive and essential influence (Henwood, in Richardson, 1996, p. 32). Because of the

interpretative and reflective nature of the research, the research design may alter during the course of the study. “A qualitative research design evolves and is likely not clarified until data collection ends. What may start as a case study may indeed develop into a design that more closely resembles a phenomenological study” (Suter, 2012, p. 343). A qualitative methodology is appropriate when an interpretative paradigm is the choice of the researcher. I have developed this argument more thoroughly in the discussion on the research methodology in Section 4.4.

### **4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Any research enquiry requires a strategy, which emphasises the most important points that will be addressed. This research design will provide an adaptable guideline which will connect the theoretical framework with the research methodology I have chosen. It will also connect me, as the researcher, to the research site, the research participants and the various sets of interpretative data (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The choice of a research design for this study was a basic interpretive qualitative study. A constructivist approach underpins a basic interpretive qualitative study. The understanding of the meaning of the phenomenon to those involved, in this case fatalism to adolescents in South Africa, is important to the researcher (Merriam, 2009, p.37). This meaning is not something that lies waiting to be discovered, but is constructed as human beings live their lives in the world and tries to interpret their own being in the world or “Dasein” as explained by Heidegger (1962, in: Wilcke, 2002, p.2). Learning how individuals experience and interact with their social world and the meaning of this experience for them is considered an interpretive qualitative approach (Merriam, 2002, p.4).

Phenomenology, symbolic interaction and hermeneutics (as previously argued) inform interpretive qualitative research. Phenomenologists emphasise the subjective aspects of people’s behaviour in attempting to enter into their conceptual world in order to understand how they give meaning to the events in their daily lives (Merriam, 2009, p.37). A term often associated with phenomenology is “lived

experience.” This refers to the interest in how a person’s (or group’s) experience becomes embedded in consciousness and what meaning this experience carries (Suter, 2012, pp. 366-367). In this inquiry I have deviated from the traditional understanding of phenomenological inquiry into a specific lived experience, but rather used the term “lived experience” to describe, in a broad manner, all the influences in the participants’ context that may influence them to think and act in a specific way. I have therefore used the term “lived experience” not in the classical phenomenological sense (also see Chapter 1.). Symbolic interaction focuses on interpretation in the context of larger society. The focus is here on the meaning that is created as the research participants interact with other people (Crotty, 1998 in Merriam, 2009, p. 37). Symbolic interaction refers to the fact that meaning is constructed when the researcher puts himself in the position of the other and seeing things from his or her perspective. It also refers to the way in which the understanding of oneself is constructed in interaction with other people (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992, in: Merriam, 2009, p.37). Hermeneutics is concerned with the conditions under which a human act took place or a product was produced that makes it possible to interpret its meaning, drawing strongly on theology, philosophy and literary criticism (Henning et al, 2004, p.16). A basic interpretative qualitative study would therefore be concerned with how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. This focus has been explained in the discussion on the role of meaning making in the minds of the research participants as part of the larger hermeneutical process in Section 4.2.2.2 – in particular where I have explained the meaning of the fourth tier (*verstehen* as the research participants’ understanding of their own lived experiences during the research process).

A basic interpretive and descriptive qualitative study represents all the characteristics of qualitative research. In conducting a basic qualitative study, one seeks to discover a phenomenon, a process, the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved, or a combination of these (Merriam, 2009, pp.7-8). Thus, I have endeavoured to understand how the adolescents as participants make meaning of their own lived experiences and how these may have influenced their cognitive and behavioural processes in terms of fatalistic thinking. This meaning has been mediated through me, the researcher, as primary research instrument, by means of



an inductive strategy which eventually produced a descriptive outcome in which I have described the phenomenon of adolescent fatalism (Merriam, 2009, pp.7-8).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001, pp. 270-271), this type of exploratory study is most typically done for the purposes of satisfying the researcher's curiosity and desire for better understanding, testing the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study, and develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study. An exploratory study enables the researcher to understand a phenomenon that has not been studied before better, or where little is known about the phenomenon. Because no literature exists describing fatalistic thinking in adolescents, this study will also adhere to a strong exploratory stance.

Thus, I attempted this study as a basic interpretive research design in an attempt to understand what constitutes fatalism in adolescents and how it relates to their lived experiences, as well as how it might influence their cognitive processes (*inter alia*, their decision making) and, as a consequence, their educational attainment.

## **4.4 QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY**

### **4.4.1 Qualitative descriptive research**

Henwood (in Richardson, 1996, p. 27) contrasted quantitative research with qualitative research, postulating that the contribution of qualitative research lies in the understanding of the deeper meaning of experiences, actions and events that it brings to research, while the positivist approach focuses on exact quantifiable variables that can be proven in a positivistic sense. Experiences, actions and events are interpreted through the eyes of participants and researchers, within the context of various cultures and sub-cultures. It requires sensitivity to the complexities of behaviour and meaning in the contexts where they typically or naturally occur. Thus, qualitative research is often labelled as 'interpretative', 'contextual' and 'naturalistic' (Henwood, in Richardson, 1996, p. 27). Qualitative research seeks to understand both the internal and external realities of man, concerning it with phenomena that exist in the mind, but also in the objective world and seeks to explore the multitude of relationships that exist between them (Henwood, in Richardson, 1996, p. 27).



I have therefore endeavoured to understand the situations that I have encountered during the inquiry as unique and as part of a specific setting with particular interactions. I strove towards an in-depth understanding of fatalism in adolescents, taking into account the research phenomenon, the process of inquiry, the perspectives and worldviews of the participants or any combination of these. As the primary research instrument, I collected data through creative strategies, semi-structured focus group interviews and personal interviews. This allowed me to be responsive and alert to whatever may unfold. Qualitative research is inductive, gleaning various kinds of data from the research experience in order to understand a phenomenon and make meaning. I tried to express the research data in tentative categories, emphasising the recurring patterns or common themes that cut across the data. I strove towards producing a qualitative inquiry that is richly descriptive, using language, descriptions and images rather than numbers to convey what I have learnt about adolescent fatalism (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). In this descriptions I have compared what I have found to the literature that framed the study in the first place (Merriam, 2009, pp. 5-6). To achieve such a description of adolescent fatalism, I had to consider the specific nature of qualitative data.

#### ***4.4.1.1 The nature of qualitative data***

Qualitative data usually consist of quotations, observations and excerpts from documents. It captures someone else's meaning making in one's own words. Qualitative data is narrative in nature – it tells a story (Patton, 2002, p.47). Once the story is heard and a trustworthy understanding of the language and behaviour of individual human beings is established by qualitative methods, we may begin the process of interpretation.

In the description of adolescent fatalism, I have made an effort to generalize, predict and connect initial states to outcomes. These efforts required some evidence-based activities such as creative strategies, semi-structured focus group and individual interviews that I have used to explore and construct central themes (Charon, Greene & Adelman 1998, p. 68). This type of qualitative data collection required direct personal experience and engagement. This meant going into the field, getting close to the research participants and their contexts to capture what is

happening. Denzin (1978, pp. 8, 9; as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 48) argued that, collecting qualitative data means “the studied commitment to actively enter the worlds of interacting individuals.” This enables one to understand and describe both externally observable behaviours and internal states (worldview, opinions, values, attitudes and symbolic constructs) (Patton, 2002, p.48).

## **4.5 RESEARCH PROCEDURES**

### **4.5.1 Describing the research problem**

The types of questions asked are paramount in conducting a qualitative study. Marshall and Rossman (1995) suggested that qualitative research is designed to (1) understand processes, (2) describe poorly understood phenomena, (3) understand differences between stated and implemented policies or theories, and (4) discover thus far unspecified contextual variables (Merriam, 2009, p.11). As discussed in Chapter 1 and indicated earlier in this chapter this study aims to investigate the possibility and nature of fatalistic thinking as it manifests in the lived experiences of adolescents and the possible influence such a mind-set will have in their educational attainment

### **4.5.2 Sampling, site selection and entering the field**

This research study targeted the lived experiences of adolescent learners in high schools in the Western Cape. As indicated before, qualitative enquiry needs to be naturalistic. The research therefore needs to take place in real world settings such as in the high schools chosen for this study. These schools provided a collective context for the lived experiences of adolescents in South Africa. To set up a naturalistic context for the research I have used both convenience and purposeful (purposive) sampling. Patton (2002, cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 77) describes the concept of purposeful (purposive) sampling as based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight. Patton (2002, p. 230) stated that the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in in depth. Information- rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the

inquiry, thus the term purposeful-sampling. Convenience sampling was used on the grounds of the geographical location of the schools and accessibility to the researcher. Purposive sampling was also used as the schools were broadly selected according to the national quintiles as suggested by Setoaba (2011, p. 22). It is important to note that the research schools do not represent all the quintiles identified by the Department of Basic Education, due to geographical location and accessibility to the researcher. However, a conscious attempt was made to include schools from the widest socio-economic spectrum possible in order to be as inclusive as possible. The diversity attempted in the sample is reflected in Table 4.1, representing the locus, demography and language distribution of the learners in terms of the dominant language at the school, other languages represented as well as the language of teaching and learning.

The selection of the criteria used to construct the sample was important. In this study, the sample consisted of grade 11 adolescent learners in five schools in the Western Cape as indicated in Table 4.1. It was important to incorporate potentially widely varying instances of the phenomenon in the study (Merriam, 2009, p. 79). This was obtained by selecting the sample from various gender groups and demographic backgrounds in an attempt to fit into the criterion of maximum variation sampling as identified by Glaser and Strauss (1967; as cited in Merriam, 2009, p.79).

The following criteria were used to select the sample and for the following reasons: Grade 11 learners were chosen because they are generally between the ages of 16 and 20 and represent the middle to later stages of the phase. I expected typical developmental characteristics of adolescence to be well represented in the sample. Therefore my observations would represent the lived experiences of persons in his stage of development more accurately. The Western Cape school population provided a localised population of adolescents from diverse demographic, cultural, economic and social backgrounds. It was important that the cultural, economic and social diversity of the Western Cape population was reflected in the sample. Convenience was also taken into account in the selection of the participating schools. Schools which were reachable and accessible to the researcher were selected. Table 4.1 shows the locus, demography and language profiles of the sample schools.

**Table 4.1: Sample schools: Locus, Demography and Languages**

NAME OF SCHOOL (Pseudonyms)	LOCUS	NUMBER OF GRADE 11 LEARNERS		DOMINANT LANGUAGE	OTHER LANGUAGES	LANGUAGE OF EDUCATION AND LEARNING	NUMBER OF EDUCATORS
		MALE	FEMALE				
SCHOOL A	SEMI-METROPOLE	148	199	AFRIKAANS	AFRIKAANS	AFRIKAANS	75
SCHOOL B	LARGE RURAL TOWN	69	58	AFRIKAANS	AFRIKAANS	AFRIKAANS	44
SCHOOL C: (PRIVATE)	METROPOLE	21	37	ENGLISH	AFRIKAANS XHOSA PORTUGUESE FRENCH ITALIAN	ENGLISH	27
SCHOOL D:	SMALL RURAL TOWN	10	11	AFRIKAANS	ENGLISH ISIXHOSA SESOTHO	AFRIKAANS ENGLISH	14
SCHOOL E	INFORMAL SETTLEMENT	46	49	ISIXHOSA	ENGLISH SESOTHO	ENGLISH	28

Here follows a short description of the five sample schools. This is only an attempt give a broad description of the size, background and history of the school, as well as an indication of the socio-economic context from which the majority of the learners might be coming:

School A is situated in a semi-metropolitan area. This area still has many features of a rural area, but is developing fast into a full-blown city. The school is one of four high schools in the area and could also be categorised as a former “model C” school. It is one of the larger schools in the province with over 1700 learners. The school population cuts across a very large economical segment of the South African population. Although a number of learners are from an affluent background, a rising number of learners enter the school from the informal settlements and low cost housing areas around the town. The area is economically diverse and, as everywhere else, the unemployment rate is on the incline. The school is very well equipped with educational and sporting facilities and is fortunate to have significant financial support and investment from the larger community, creating opportunities for learners. This ensures that maintenance and development can be done on a regular basis. There are four other high schools in the area, including a school for special needs education.

School B is a school in a large rural town where there is one other high school. The economic activity of the area is predominantly based in the agricultural and

manufacturing industries. Although a large number of parents from the school community have employment, their jobs do not yield a large income. Unemployment is a great concern for a number of school households. The school has been in use for a number of years, but the buildings are well maintained and the classrooms and educational facilities are well equipped. The teacher-learner ratio is very high (above 1:40), because the governing body cannot afford more teaching posts to lighten the load. The classrooms create the impression of being over-full.

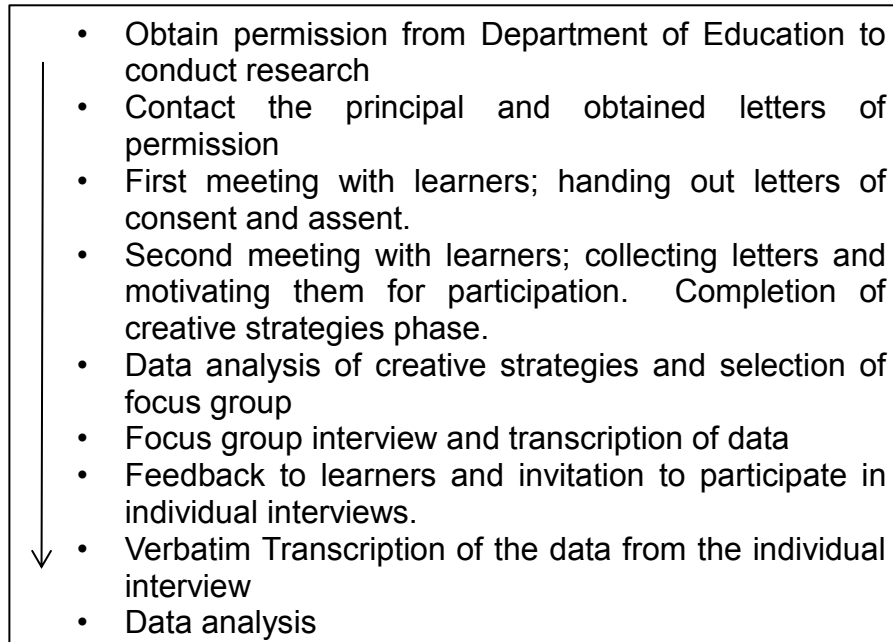
School C is a private parochial school in a large metropolitan area. The school is situated in an economically dynamic area and “competes” with several other private schools for learners. The economic profile of the school community is extremely diverse, but predominantly based on the services industry. Parental unemployment in the school community is almost non-existing. The school is still very young, but because of its affluence, has developed a significant infrastructure in a short space of time. The school is very well equipped with educational resources. Learners often do not use printed textbooks, but prefer textbooks in e-book format that they can use on their electronic media.

School D is situated in one of the beautiful historical towns in the Western Cape. The school is one of two high schools in the area. During the years of apartheid, this was classified as a model C school. The term “model C” signified that the school was well-equipped and did not need significant financial assistance from government. However, the school building is fast becoming old and run-down as funds are currently scarce and by far the majority of the learners come from previously disadvantaged communities. Very little maintenance is being done to the infrastructure. Generally the school is still very well equipped, but there are pressing maintenance issues like cracked walls that need urgent attention. This could become a safety risk soon. Learners have computer and internet access. There are ample sports facilities. The school hosts both a primary and a high school and the high school staff is obliged to also teach in the primary school because of a shortage of government posts. The governing body is not in a position to pay competitive salaries to employ extra educators. Most of the learners are from the local community, which in essence is dependent on agriculture and, to a lesser extent on the tourism and hospitality industries. Rising unemployment is a great concern.

School E is a school in a rural informal settlement adjacent to a larger rural economic town. Although the main economic generator is agriculture and industry, very few of the parents in the informal settlement are employed in these sectors. Unemployment is a great concern in the school community. Many of the learners are living in fragmented family situations or re-constituted families. Some are migrant learners from other provinces and are either living on their own or take care of other siblings. The school is well equipped with spacious sports fields and well-equipped classrooms. Students and staff members have access to computers and the internet. The new school building has recently been completed and fulfils the current needs of the community. The school is one of four high schools in close proximity.

Table 4.2 shows a general timeline for the collection of data at a school according to the order of events.

**Table 4.2 Timeline of the data collection process**



The research participants were selected purposefully, using the following protocol: The principal was approached with a letter of permission to conduct the research. After written permission was granted, I approached the principal to make

arrangements to meet the learners. A time and place was established for the first meeting. In all the schools permission was granted to use two Life Orientation periods for the purpose of the research, without the Life Orientation teacher being present. It was also agreed with the school to use one class from grade 11 as a first group for the creative and reflective stage of the meeting. I decided to use only one class per school because of time constraints. Two of the sselected schools only had one class of approximately 30 grade 11 learners anyway and it made sense to use roughly the same amount of learners from each school.

During the first meeting, I introduced myself to the learners and explained the purpose of the research. I explained that participation was voluntary and that they would not be disadvantaged in any way for not taking part. Letters of assent and parental consent were handed out. Their anonymity was guaranteed throughout all the phases of the research process.

During the second meeting, the forms of assent and consent were collected and reviewed. I have motivated the class to take part in the first phase of the data-collection, which was the creative strategy phase. This phase consisted of a creative drawing and a short written assignment. After the data sheets were collected, I explained to them that I will process the data and approach a group of eight learners (four boys, four girls) to take part in the next phase of the research. I extended my gratitude to the group for their participation.

After I have studied the data sheets, I purposefully selected learners from each sample group according to the following criteria. Firstly, I ensured a gender balance in the group, selecting four males and four females. I also took the language and cultural demography of the school into account and tried to ensure that a pro rata balance was achieved. For example, in school D the dominant language was Afrikaans, but about 25% of the learners had an African language as home language. I selected two learners from the African languages group and six from the Afrikaans group.

I approached the selected learners for participation in the focus group interviews. Where some declined, they were replaced with other learners who were willing to

participate. A focus group meeting was scheduled for a specific Life Orientation period on a day that suited the school, the research participants and myself. The focus group meeting was conducted as a semi-structured interview by means of an interview schedule. The interview schedule will be discussed in Section 4.5.2.2. At the beginning of the meeting, I explained to the learners that an audio recording will be made in order to make a written transcription for research purposes. At the end of the meeting, I thanked the participants for their willingness to participate and their co-operation. I also explained to them that I might like to do an in-depth interview with one of them in future. I asked them to indicate if they would be willing to participate in the in depth-interviews. The selection for the individual interviews was purposive based on specific content that was revealed during the focus group interview. I have used an open-ended discussion during the personal interviews. The individual interview served as a means to do member checking and triangulate the data sources.

Once I have listened to and transcribed the contents of the focus group interviews verbatim, I selected individuals who indicated that they were willing to participate in the individual interviews. I approached them to set up a time, date and venue for the interview. Before the interviews I obtained their permission to make an audio recording for future transcription. I thanked them for their co-operation and reassured them of their anonymity.

The safety and well-being of the learners was my highest priority during the process of data collection. During the course of the research, an opportunity was made available for learners to see a registered counsellor or psychologist if desired, but none of the learners felt the need for it. The following table (Table 4.3) illustrates the participation profile of the data-collection phase:



**Table 4.3 Analysis of the number of research participants per school**

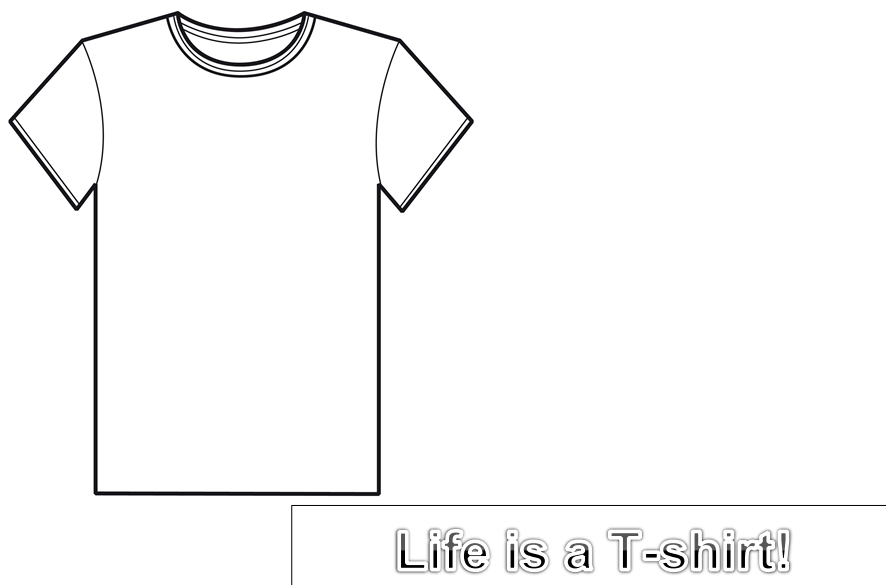
School:	Number of participants: Creative and reflective stage		Number of participants: Focus Group		Number of participants: Personal Interview	
GENDER:	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
SCHOOL A	29	33	4	4	1	
SCHOOL B	16	19	4	4	1	
SCHOOL C	7	13	4	4		1
SCHOOL D	11	11	4	4	1	
SCHOOL E	8	17	3	5		1

#### 4.5.4 Methods of data collection

##### 4.5.4.1 Creative strategies

As a first method of data collection, I used art (drawing) as a creative strategy. The motivation for this was that verbal dialogue can sometimes be limiting and, as the saying goes, a picture can be worth a thousand words. Deacon (2000, p.1) mentioned that that people's drawings, whether literal depictions or abstract symbolisms, can generate quality data in a fun and creative manner. I also thought that the design of a T-shirt, which was something that placed the research vividly in the centre of the adolescent experience, could motivate the research participants to volunteer for the research. It also gave them the opportunity to express their feelings in a completely non-threatening environment. To draw a picture was also an activity that could extract them from the hustle and bustle of a very busy day in high school and might have enabled them to reflect better on themselves and their environment.

You can actively engage research participants in the data collection process by asking them to draw their perceptions, feelings, or a situation instead of using verbal description (Deacon, 2000, p. 2). I have given the participants the following opportunity. They had to follow the instructions below the diagram in Figure. 4.1.



**Figure. 4.3: Data sheet for creative strategies phase**

**Instructions:**

“This T-shirt cries out for you to fill the empty space with something that is so YOU....something that tells the world how you feel about life right now. Don’t let anything hold you back – tell it like it is!!! You may use words, pictures or symbols – even write a sentence, anything you like. It should only take you 10 minutes or so.”

This method of data collection enabled the participants to reflect on what they thought and felt about life at that given point in time. They were free to express themselves and either verbally or symbolically describes a view, an attitude, perception or event that represented their world view and perception of life in general. In doing so, I gave them the opportunity to express themselves in their own context without feeling inhibited or as if they are being prescribed to. The participants had a further opportunity for expression by supplementing their T-shirt designs with words in a descriptive paragraph.

Deacon (2000, p.3) argued that art is a useful method to explore a phenomenon in a multi-disciplinary way. She argues that qualitative researchers often only use verbal means of data collection in researching a multi-faceted phenomenon. The purpose behind many of these more creative methods is to find ways to “make living systems

actually come alive; to not only hear, but to see the stories behind the participants' perceptions and experiences; to not only observe, but to actually become a part of that which we as researchers are studying" (Deacon, 2000, p. 3).

Art and drawing are expressive ways by which children of all ages can provide information to researchers and serve as participants in the research (Kwiatkowska, 1978; Willmuth & Boedy, 1979; in Deacon, 2000, p. 4). Utilising artistic expression provides a way to capture participants' experiences in vivo, rather than through words alone (Deacon, 2000, p. 4).

#### **4.5.4.2 Focus group interviews**

In conducting the focus group and individual interviews, I attempted to remain true to the interpretive paradigm by conducting the interview from an "insider" perspective by being personally involved, trying to understand the responses of the adolescent participants from their point of view. I fully understood that, by my own responses, verbally and non-verbally, I become a co-constructor of the data, along with the participants. I have thoroughly considered the discursive nature of the interview, regarding it as a dynamic dialogue in which meaning are constructed. I also understood that qualitative content analysis might be an appropriate method of data-analysis for individual interviews, because of the use of language to express meaning (Henning et al., 2004, pp. 115-116).

In conducting the interview I had to establish a good rapport with the participants as I am fully reliant on how much data they are willing to disclose. Therefore I started each interview with a conversation during which I tried to establish a relationship of trust and safety. I have once again confirmed the confidentiality of our conversation and guaranteed absolute anonymity of the research participant during the process of data analysis, academic reporting and thereafter.

Henning et al. (2004, p.60) mentioned that the interviewer should have a certain cultural knowledge about the participant to draw from the vast body of experience and knowledge of the individual participant during the conversation. The interviewer can go only as far as the interviewee will let him or her and vice versa. When people

talk about their life experience, their emotions, their opinions etc., they categorise these according to the socialised categories they know and are comfortable with (Henninget al., 2004, p.60). I understood that the interview in itself does not contain meaning, but that meaning is created as we speak. ((Henninget al., 2004, p.61).

“Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behaviour, feelings or how people interpret the world around them” (Merriam, 2009, p.88). The purpose of an open ended focus group interview is summarised by Patton (2002, p.56):

The focus group discussions will be conducted in the form of open-ended interviews that has a specific pre-determined purpose in mind, but allows participants to express their own views and experience freely. Open-ended questions will be asked with the abovementioned purpose in mind. An open-ended interview...”permits the respondent to describe what is meaningful and salient without being *pigeonholed* into standardized categories” (Patton, 2002, p.56). Patton (2002, p. 347) suggested the following reasons for using standardised open-ended interviews: Those who will use the findings of the study will have the access to the exact tool used for inspection. The interview is highly focused so the interviewee time is used efficiently. Analysis is facilitated by making responses easy to find and compare. Experience and Behaviour Questions can be asked to prompt behaviour or actions that would have been observable had the observer been present (e.g., “If I followed you through a typical day, what would I see you doing?”) Opinion and Judgement Questions are aimed at understanding the cognitive and interpretative processes of people. They ask about opinions, judgements and values (e.g., “What do you believe? What do you think about...? What would you like to see happen? What is your opinion of...?”). Feeling Questions are aimed at getting adjective responses (e.g., “How does ..... make you feel? How do you feel when...?”) Knowledge Questions are aimed at the participant’s factual information (e.g., “What do you know about...?”) Background Questions is about age, education and occupation. It tells us how people classify themselves in today’s society. (Patton, 2002, pp. 351-352). I have incorporated these ideas into the focus group interviews by utilising the various verbs suggested.

I have used the Free will-Determinism scale of Stroessner and Green (2001), mentioned in chapter two, as a guide to plot the general themes of the focus group interviews. The following broad themes have been explored during the semi-structured focus group interviews, with a specific rationale behind the guiding questions as indicated in table 4.3:

**Table 4.4 Interview guide for focus group**

Open-ended questions (focus group)	Type of Question	Rationale behind the questions
<b>INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS:</b>		
How would you describe the world you live in today? How does your description of the world make you feel?	Experience and behaviour Feeling	Inquiry into their world view – positive or negative, maybe, nihilistic, or other?
What is it that makes you do things in a specific way or informs the decisions you take?	Knowledge	
<b>QUESTIONS EXPLORING RELIGIOUS-PHILOSOPHICAL DETERMINISM</b>		
How do you understand the idea that, whichever higher power you believe in, determines how your life is going to work out.	Opinion and judgement	Exploration of their view of possible locus/loci of control in their lives.
If you agree with the idea that a higher power determines how your life is going to work out; do you think that this higher power's will is stronger than your will and determines the choices you are going to make?	Opinion and judgement	
What do you feel about the idea that there may be a larger plan for your life that you cannot go against and determines how your life will work out?	Opinion and judgement	
<b>QUESTIONS EXPLORING LIBERTARIANISM (BELIEF IN FREE WILL OR CHANCE)</b>		
How do you feel about the idea that one is absolutely free to make one's own decisions?	Opinion and judgement	Exploration into their view of how they see chance and/or free will as a random determinant in life.
How do you understand the idea that one's circumstances may determine or influence one's decisions?	Opinion and judgement	
How do you understand the idea that some people are luckier than others are?	Opinion and judgement	
How do you feel about the following statement? I have an	Feeling	

influence on the way my life will turn out.		
<b>QUESTIONS EXPLORING PSYCHOSOCIAL DETERMINISM</b>		
What do you think about the idea that one can do absolutely as you please and the opinions and influence of others have no influence in the choices you make.	Opinion and judgement	Explorations into how they view psychosocial factors as determining their choices.
Do you think that your gender influences the choices you are allowed to make in South Africa?	Opinion and judgement	
Do you think that your race influences the choices that you are allowed to make in South Africa?	Opinion and judgement	
Do you think that your wealth and social status have an influence on the choices you are allowed to make?	Opinion and judgement	
How do you feel – is the way in which you were brought up (with certain customs and traditions) influencing the decisions you are allowed to make?	Opinion and judgement	

#### **4.5.4.3 Individual interviews**

After the data of the focus group interviews have been reviewed, and individual interview with one learner per school were scheduled. Individual learners were selected who revealed an interesting opinion or idea during the interview that might have yielded a clearer or more descriptive clarification of concepts than what was the case during the focus group interviews. Individual interviews also gave me the opportunity to clear up uncertainties that might have arisen during the focus group interviews. Individual interviews have given me the opportunity to generate much richer and more textured descriptions of the participants' experiences. The emerging themes may be useful to plan intervention strategies in education to protect vulnerable adolescents from being overpowered by what they perceive to be controlling "powers" in their lives. The individual interviews also allowed me to do member checking to establish whether I have understood the meaning making processes of the participants correctly.

The methods of data collection yielded specific data that can be described as research findings. The findings of this research study do not predict any behaviour related to fatalism, but describes how fatalism in adolescents may be related to their lived experiences. It suggests that the lived experiences of adolescents may influence the way in which they think and make decisions, and how these cognitive processes may influence their academic attainment (Henning et al., Smith, 2004, p.22).

#### **4.5.5 Data preparation: The permanent record**

The interviews have been recorded by means of a digital recording device. The interviews have been transcribed verbatim. A different data set has been made for each of the five groups in the sample. The different data sets have each been labelled to distinguish it from the others, but the details of the labels will not be disclosed to any other but the researcher and his supervisors. Each individual section of text represented a response from the research participants. These responses were numerically referenced according to the data set it belongs to, as well as the research participant who gave the response. Each participant received a code containing a reference to the five schools, as well as a unique number, for example, a response coded as D: 15 would be from participant no. 15 in school D. In the presentation of the data, individual data units were numbered for easier reference in the discussion of the data (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996; in Richardson, 1996, p. 89-90).

#### **4.5.6 Method of Data-analysis: Qualitative content analysis**

The data sets used in this research study are the data sheets of the creative strategy phase (including the T-shirt design and the short written explanation thereof) and the transcribed interviews of the focus group and individual interviews. Verbatim transcriptions of each interview was made and reviewed to ensure accuracy. Only then could I proceed with the data analysis in order to make meaning out of the data.

This process of meaning making entailed consolidating, reducing and interpreting what the participants have said and what the researcher have observed and read.

This appeared to be a complex process that involved “moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning and between description and interpretation” (Merriam, 2009, p.176). Qualitative inquiry is particularly oriented toward exploration, discovery and inductive logic. Inductive analysis begins with specific observations and builds toward general patterns. Categories emerge from the raw data as the researcher comes to understand certain patterns present in the data (Patton, 2002, p.56).

As a qualitative researcher I used an inductive method to systematically build a structure for understanding my findings. I tried to compare my own understanding of fatalism in adolescents against the data, allowing the data to alter my own perceptions. After familiarising myself with the data, I labelled the units of meaning. I have used mostly written texts to identify the various units of meaning.

While surveying the data, I was aware of several pitfalls such as repeating codes, or to allocate codes to parts of the data that was unclear. I made sure that I read the entire transcript first to compare unclear units of data with other units that may reveal its meaning. As each new theme and possible explanation emerged, I compared it to other sources of data until no new insights emerged and I could close the analysis (Suter, 2012, p. 362). It was important to allow the data categories to develop freely without preconceiving or anticipating what the data would yield (Patton, 2002, p.56). I also had to be aware not to contaminate the qualitative data obtained from the creative activity, focus group and individual interviews with the results and views of research mentioned in the literature review. The reason being that constructs might have emerged from the data that may be obscured if the data was read through the lens of previous research findings. For example, placing and conducting the research study in the context of South African education, might have yielded new data categories that could contribute in a new way to the understanding of fatalism.

The process of data analysis was highly inductive and consisted of clustering and coding specific pieces of data to create data categories that corresponded with the research questions. I have used the three phases of coding as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2007; as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 200): Open coding: In the beginning of the data analysis any data that may be relevant to the study was



labelled; Axial coding: Categories and properties were related to each other and refined; Selective coding was used to define main categories. Merriam (2009, p.185) contended that data categories should be responsive to the purpose of the research, exhaustive, mutually exclusive, accurate pertaining the data, and conceptually congruent. Once all the sets of data have been coded and categorised, I had to try and get a global impression of the data. To achieve this, I tried to establish the relationships in meaning between all the categories. I also looked for what was missing from the data. It was important at this stage to establish how the data answered the research questions. A link with the literature reviewed had to be established. Bearing in mind what I already knew about the research topic, I had to look at themes and categories that moved to the foreground of the research, but also consider those that might have become less prominent (Henning, et, al, 2004, p. 106)

Writing has now become an important part in the process of analysis. Once I have reached the stage where I believed that the themes were adequately representing the phenomenon of adolescent fatalism, I could with confidence use individual themes as the basis of arguments upon which the final discussion of the data was built. "Processed data do not have the status of "findings" until the themes have been discussed and argued to make a point, and the point that is to be made, comes from the research questions" (Henning et al., 2004, p.108). I have now proceeded to revisit the original reason why the research topic were investigated and expanded further arguments about new knowledge claims regarding fatalistic thinking in adolescents. The re-contextualisation of the data means that the final data are integrated as evidence in an argument. The original data text and the context were fused. I have also compared the data with the literature discussed in the literature review in support of and to explicate the new arguments I have constructed (Henning et al, 2004, p.108).

#### **4.6 THE QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH**

Merriam (2009, p. 165) stated that the choice of a qualitative research design presupposes a particular worldview. This world view determines how a researcher would regard the notions of validity and reliability. Merriam (2009, p. 209) contrasted

validity, reliability and generalizability, the research quality criteria associated with a modernist paradigm, with the postmodern paradigm. Postmodernists do not assume that a universal set of truths exists or that objective truths can be independently known. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 24) argued that the modernist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and generalizability should be replaced by credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in post-modernist qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). These four criteria would then constitute the trustworthiness of the inquiry and have been employed in this study

#### **4.6.1 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness relates to whether the findings of a study are worthy of consideration (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 276). Guba and Lincoln (2005, p. 206) argued that, if the results of an inquiry is reliable enough to guide future actions, they can be considered trustworthy. The criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability can be used to determine trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). Because this research study is interpretative and relates more to the postmodernist approach, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability have been used to assess the trustworthiness of the study.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 277) transferability implies that the results or findings of a study can be applied in other contexts, or can be related to other participants. To be able to transfer the results, I attempted to describe it in a rich-descriptive manner in order to create a “thick description” (Patton, 2002, p. 437). I described all aspects of the research to the best of my ability in order to make the results transferable. Because I used purposive sampling, it will be easier to transfer the findings of that group to a group with a similar constituency or characteristics (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 277).

Credibility, dependability and confirmability form a triad of characteristics that are interconnected and interdependent according to Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 277). If the realities experienced by the participants reflect what is ascribed to these realities in the presentation of the findings, the study may be regarded as credible (Merriam, 2009, p. 213). A dependable study would produce similar results if it was

to be repeated by another independent researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 277). Confirmability expresses the degree to which the findings of the study are in fact the product of the focus of the inquiry, and cannot be attributed only to bias or the interpretation of the researcher (Babbie & Mouton, 2001, p. 277).

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 308) postulated peer debriefing as a means to improve the credibility of the study. Peer debriefing includes “exposing oneself to a disinterested peer...for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit in the inquirer’s mind” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 308). In terms of a research study this was done by discussing various aspects of the study with my supervisors.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 210), dependability was established by the careful examination of each step in the progression of the study, including an analysis to determine if the process was applicable and appropriate to the research. This I hope to have achieved in this study. I tried to attain confirmability by keeping a careful register of the process of inquiry and by ensuring access to the data during every stage of the processing and analysis. This has been done by the keeping of records.

The confirmability and dependability in this chapter was established by the description of the various aspects of the research paradigm for this study. This is supported by relating the research methodology to the research paradigm, referring to each stage of the research process. Records of the process of inquiry will have been preserved by keeping paper transcriptions of the digital audio recordings of all focus group sessions. These will be stored on a password protected computer and will be kept for five years before they are destroyed. A summary of the chronology of the process of inquiry is included as an addendum to the study (Addendum H). An excerpt from one of the focus group transcripts is included as an example of the coding system that I have used (Addendum I).

#### 4.6.2 Authenticity

Guba and Lincoln (2005, p. 205) argued that validity relates to trustworthiness. Validity assesses whether the research findings can be trusted by the researcher as being authentic enough to actually act upon what they imply. Therefore, Guba and Lincoln (2005, p. 207) postulated that validity *inter alia* is a form of authenticity. These forms of authenticity determine whether the research inquiry will be authentic, trustworthy, rigorous and valid. It is important to note that these characteristics should be assessed throughout the research process and applied to each aspect of the inquiry.

These principles of authenticity include five fundamental dimensions, namely, balance or fairness, ontological authenticity; educative authenticity; catalytic authenticity; and tactical authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 207; Lincoln, 2009, p. 153). These dimensions provide the criteria that can be used in the *a posteriori* judgement of the processes and outcomes of inquiries, rather than the application of methods.

Fairness, or balance, refers to the efforts of the researcher to involve all stakeholders in decisions regarding the research. In this study, this has been obtained by thorough communication between the researcher and the school principals and educators, between the researcher and the participants with letters of assent and consent and the invitation to participate voluntarily in the various stages of data collection. The parents of the participants have also been informed of the research and signed letters of consent. It further includes efforts to prevent marginalisation by representing all voices in the text, and not focusing findings “for the benefit of funders, program managers, administrators, local governmental officials, and others who hold fiscal or political power over research participants” (Lincoln, 2009, p. 155). This was attained by using a semi-structured interview system that allowed the researcher to continuously ensure that the participants were all involved and that each voice was heard individually and in equal amount. This also pertains to the findings of this research study in which the voices of the participants should still be equally heard. Care has been taken that those at risk of being marginalised were included throughout the process. To ensure fairness it was important that the

researcher remained impartial, and ensure the impartiality of the participants, to any individual or group with vested interest in the outcomes of the study or who can influence the outcome of the study by their position of superiority (Lincoln, 2009, p. 155). To obtain this, the researcher observed and collected all the data alone with the research participants without any interference from school authorities or educators.

Ontological authenticity refers to the capacity of the inquiry to add new levels of awareness and knowledge about how the social reality of the participants was constructed. This could involve bringing to the surface tacit constructions that the participants were unaware they held. This is an important step in the making of meaning and could result in meaningful action (Lincoln, 2009, p. 154). I believe that this inquiry included a deep awareness of how the social reality of the participants was constructed and how this may have influenced their process of meaning making.

Educational authenticity relates to raising awareness through the accessibility of all data to the participants. This allows the data to become the property of the community involved, rather than allowing only privileged access to those in positions of power (Lincoln, 2009, p. 154). The data has been made available to the research participants who could access it if they were interested in it. The discussion of the data and findings will be printed and distributed to the participants with a certificate of acknowledgement that they have participated in academic research.

Catalytic and tactical authenticity refer to the degree to which the study causes positive action on the side of the participants by creating enough interest, making them realise the implied consequences and importance of the discussion, to affect them into positive action. This was ensured in my initial introduction to the participants, stressing to them the importance of their contribution to the research and academic discourse. This motivated them to participate and none of the learners declined the opportunity. According to Lincoln (2009, p. 154) it involves the training of “participants on how to speak the truth to power and how to utilize recognised policies and procedures to make their wishes known to those in authority”. In the introductory discussion which preceded the actual collection of data the participants were encouraged to be honest and to disregard the fact that I,

the researcher, am older than them or more experienced in life. They were made to understand that I was truly and honestly interested in hearing their voices and that nothing that they would say would put them at any sort of disadvantage.

It is of critical importance that the various aspects of trustworthiness and authenticity are accounted for during the course of an enquiry. I have endeavoured to ensure that this research is of sufficient worth to be taken account of and to be trusted as a sound platform for future actions.

#### **4.6.3 Rigour**

Rigour in research has value because it is associated with the worth of the research (Burns & Grove, 2005, p. 55). There is, however a marked difference between rigour in method associated with more positivist research methods, and the rigour at stake in a postmodern research perspective. According to Lincoln (2009, p. 153), in inquiry from a postmodern perspective, the criteria for rigour are based on “revised researcher-researched relationships” and not only on method. These revised relationships relate to self-other relations and authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 205; Lincoln, 2009, p. 153). Rigour in method (in a postmodern approach) has to do with trustworthiness or credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln, 2009, p. 153). Rigour in method is also often seen to be achieved through the process of triangulation - the use of different methods for the generation of data - which is a strategy used to promote the quality of qualitative research and relates to validity.

Triangulation is a process by which a single phenomenon is examined by using multiple observers, theories, methods, or data sources to determine the degree in which the various components of the research converge. This process offers the benefits of cross-validation of findings and a more holistic understanding by capturing the context in which phenomena occur. Triangulation can prevent common method bias when all the data is coming from the same source (Curry, Nembhard & Bradley, 2009, p. 1442-1452). In this study several methods of data collection have been employed to enhance triangulation, i.e. creative strategies, focus group interviews, individual interviews and in diverse settings.

Triangulation of the literary sources will eventually take place in the process of evaluation of the inquiry. Triangulation of the cohorts will take place during the research as each focus group will expand onto or add new data to the developing corpus of data. Triangulations of literary sources have also been done in the literature review. Triangulation was also ensured by using three strategies in the process of data collection.

After the initial phase of data analysis, the preliminary themes will be presented to the participants in order to check whether they agree with the accuracy of the interpretations. This is known as member-checking and is a strategy employed to enhance the credibility of the data analysis and meaning-making process (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 308; Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This does not mean that the participants have the power to veto the findings of the researcher. Rather, it gives the researcher the opportunity to analyse the findings from multiple perspectives (Firman, in: Given, 2008, p.191) In this inquiry member checking was done during the individual interviews by checking with the participants whether or not they agreed with my own meaning making of what happened during the focus group interviews.

#### **4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The autonomy of the participants should be honoured at all times, therefore I explained the research process and focus to potential participants before they were finally recruited. Participation was voluntary with no coercion or subtle coercion of potential participants. Participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any given point without suffering any penalty themselves. Because I was aware of the power differential between the researcher and the participants, being mostly minors, they have been be informed that they, at any given point, could have withdrawn with or without informing me. In have undertaken to protect the identity of the participants at all times and explained to them that I would only disclose information about themselves to anyone with their permission. In each focus group participants received an identity code in order to represent them as people with specific stories to tell, but also to refer to them as individuals with their own voices, identities and experience in the text of the research study. Additionally, I assigned a code to the school in which the research was conducted.

As a researcher, I am also sensitive to the fact that, given the social history of our country and our different lived experiences, a power differential may have existed between me and the researcher participants that might be based on age, race, and language, perceptions of social status and level of education. I strived to minimise the effect of the power imbalance by focusing very strongly on the researcher-researched relationship, especially in terms of being sensitive, responsive to the participants, collaborating, and consulting with them throughout the research process. I have made every effort to ensure that all their voices were heard, and that I have not been speaking on behalf of them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 32). I have endeavoured to install with them a feeling of trust, but also a sense of ownership of the outcomes of the research. I have aimed to ensure that there is opportunity for the participants to reflect on whether my perspective on their input is accurate and valid. I also take responsibility for what I wrote, well-knowing that it is by no means objective truths and only represent what I have observed and learnt from my own perspective (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 209).

#### **4.7.1 Permission to do research**

Permission to do research in government schools was granted by the Western Cape department of Education (Addendum A). I have also received clearance from the Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities) (Addendum B) to do research under the auspices of Stellenbosch University (Proposal nr: #. HS905/2013). I also obtained permission from the principals of the various schools to conduct the research at their respective schools by writing a letter (Example: Addendum C) and receiving a positive response (Example: Addendum D). Participants under the age of 18 also received a letter of assent (Addendum E) while their parents or legal guardians received a letter of parental consent (Addendum F). Participants who were 18 and older received a letter of consent (Addendum G)

#### **4.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter began by explaining the interpretivist paradigm as the paradigm that guided this research study. I explained its grounding in the *Verstehen* approach, and explained how this forms the bedrock of basic qualitative descriptive enquiry. I have



explained the motivations for the choices of paradigm and method and established justification for the research process. I discussed the worth of the research, as well as specific ethical considerations I view as important. Chapter five now discusses the research findings that emerged from the research process as was described in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Making meaning of the findings is an important part of the hermeneutical spiral explained in chapter four. The data I have presented in this chapter firstly has to do with meaning making in the minds of the research participants as they interpreted and responded to my input as researcher. Secondly it has to do with my own contribution to the hermeneutical spiral in trying to make meaning of their responses through a process of qualitative content analysis. Each of the different stages of the refinement of the data represents a different cycle in the hermeneutical spiral, creating deeper and richer text and meaning. I started the hermeneutical cycle by recording the responses of the participants and creating a permanent record thereof. In creating the record, I began a process of understanding by immersing myself in the data and trying to make meaning by recognizing emerging trends. I continued the refinement of the data by labelling it. In this case I have made use of coloured pens to indicate units of data that were similar in meaning and could be joined together under specific sub-categories and categories. I attempted a process of interpretive refinement of the data by grouping the various labels into categories. In a next cycle of interpretation, I identified strongly emergent themes under which the data could be described and interpreted. This concluded the process of meaning-making. The refinement of the data into various themes, categories and sub-categories is illustrated by examples in Addendum I.

In this chapter I will present the data by discussing the themes, categories and sub-categories. This will be followed by a discussion of the findings in light of the literature as presented in chapters two and three. This will answer the research questions. Before the presentation of the data, it needs to be clearly stated that the purpose of this study was not to compare the responses of adolescents from different groups in the sample. It was also not meant as an inquiry into the strength

of certain beliefs in different cohorts of adolescents. As discussed in chapters one and four, this inquiry aimed at answering the following research questions.

- What are the possible manifestations of fatalism in adolescents?
- How does fatalism possibly colour their lived experiences?
- How does adolescent fatalism possibly affect educational attainment in adolescents?

I took the raw data generated by means of the creative strategy activities, the focus group interviews and the personal interviews through a process of refinement as discussed before to eventually identify three themes as illustrated in Table 5.1 with the corresponding categories and sub-categories.

**Table 5.1 Themes, categories and sub-categories**

THEMES	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
THEME 1: BELIEFS ABOUT LIFE		
	Positive beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life is good</li> </ul>
	Negative beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life is bad</li> </ul>
	Ambivalent beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life is confusing</li> <li>• Life is negative and positive</li> </ul>
THEME 2: BELIEFS ABOUT EXTERNAL INFLUENCES		
	Beliefs about God and religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beliefs about God's control over life</li> <li>• Beliefs about a higher power's predetermined plan</li> <li>• Beliefs that God has created us with predetermined abilities and potential</li> <li>• Beliefs about God as an enabling force in one's life</li> <li>• Beliefs about the devil as a disabling force in one's life</li> </ul>
	Beliefs about the influence of the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effect of the economic environment</li> <li>• Beliefs of the social environment</li> </ul>
	Beliefs about the relations between the self and others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence of peers</li> <li>• Influence of parents</li> <li>• Beliefs of the other as a threat to the self</li> <li>• Beliefs of the effect of economic injustice on the self</li> <li>• Beliefs of the effect of</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>racial injustice on the self</li> <li>Beliefs of the effect of gender inequality on the self</li> </ul>
<b>THEME 3: BELIEFS OF SELF AGENCY</b>		
	Beliefs about self-efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beliefs of freedom of the will within a greater plan.</li> <li>Fixed beliefs about own potential</li> </ul>
	Beliefs about self- efficacy based on perceptions of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beliefs of self-efficacy based on feedback from others</li> </ul>

## 5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The research findings are now discussed according to the themes which came to the fore during the data analysis. The three themes reflect the subjective realities of the grade 11 learners involved in the study and their perception of their own lived experiences. The data presented was coded according to their sources by using the following codes: Colour marking has been used to locate specific trends under categories and sub-categories. The individual units of data have been referred to in the rest of this document according to the speaker source, e.g., A2. Individual responses are numbered e.g.: “1) Life is good” (E11)”. In the discussion of the data, the numbers of the relevant data units are indicated in square brackets for easy reference e.g.: [1; 5; 12]. I have numbered the responses to allow myself to refer to relevant data more easily during the discussion. Original responses in Afrikaans have been translated into English.

### 5.2.1 Beliefs about life

The theme of beliefs about life consists of three categories of findings, namely positive beliefs, negative beliefs and ambivalent beliefs. I describe these categories with substantiating evidence from the data.

### 5.2.1.1 Positive beliefs

Contrary to expectations regarding fatalistic thoughts or mind-sets, certain participants responded with positive beliefs about life, e.g. that life is good, that they are content with what life grants them, that they are happy and that life brings joy to them.

- 1) "Life is good" (E11)
- 2) "Tevrede met dit wat na my kant toe kom" / "Satisfied with what comes my way" (A4)
- 3) (Image: Flower) "Ek is geseënd met liefde en geluk. Op die oomblik is ek die gelukkigste persoon op aarde" / "I am blessed with love and happiness. At the moment I am the happiest person in the world" (A9)
- 4) (Image: Smiley face) "Smiley says I have joy in my heart" (E16)
- 5) "God gee vir ons die lewe om te geniet" / "God granted us life to enjoy it" (A23)

### 5.2.1.2 Negative beliefs

Contrary to the fact that some participants felt positive about life, a large group of learners expressed negative feelings about life or of what life means to them. They said that they often feel that life has no meaning and that they are under pressure. Learners sometimes described life as hard, unfair, difficult and dangerous. This seemed to have a negative effect on their efficacy and motivation.

- 6) "Ek word moedeloos oor my ouers, vriende en die liefde. Die lewe is betekenisloos, maar die Here bring iets beter" / "I become despondent because of my parents, friends and love life. Life is meaningless, but God brings something better" (A2)
- 7) "As die lewe jou onder druk sit en jy voel jy kan nie uitkom nie. Dan doen jy maar liever niks nie en dink: OK, dan los ek maar liever alles" / "When people put you under pressure you feel that you can't get out. Then you would rather do nothing and think: OK, then I'll just leave everything" (A7)
- 8) "Die lewe kan jou soms lelik seermaak" / "Life can hurt you in an ugly way" (A23)
- 9) "Die lewe is hard en voel soms onmoontlik en ek sukkel deesdae met alles. Dit voel onmoontlik vir my" / "Life is hard and it almost feels impossible. Life isn't easy and I am

- struggling with everything these days. It feels impossible to me*" (A46)
- 10) *"My idols are dead and my enemies are in power"* (A51)
- 11) *"Die lewe is moeilik en gevaarlik" / "Life is difficult and dangerous"* (B27)
- 12) *"Die lewe is moeilik en onregverdig" / "Life is difficult and unfair"* (B29)
- 13) *"Life is unfair and difficult. People suffer and others are rewarded". Life is difficult and you have to keep up standards. Life is full of bullshit because of what other people say or do"* (C14)
- 14) *"Ek wens ek was nooit gebore nie. Dinge raak partykeer te veel". Ek voel hopeloos en sonder liefde, asof alles verkeerd loop / "I wish I was never born. Things become too much sometimes. I feel hopeless, without love, as if everything is going wrong"* (D7)
- 15) *"Life is difficult because I have to keep up with other people's standards"* (C14)

### 5.2.1.3 Ambivalent beliefs

Quite a number of learners attached ambivalent meanings to life or stated that they experienced life as confusing and unpredictable. They were often aware of their own inexperience in life.

- 16) *(Image: "Confused")* (A1)
- 17) *"Die lewe is deurmekaar" / "Life is confusing"* (A5)
- 18) *"Die lewe is 'n lied, leef dit. Die lewe is nie maklik nie, maar jy moet dankbaar wees. Alles gebeur met 'n doel in jou lewe" / "Life is a song, live it. Life is not always easy, but you must be grateful. Everything happens with a purpose"* (A10)
- 19) *"Die lewe is stresvol, angstig, onvoorspelbaar, maklik en bevat 'n ryk toekoms" / "Life is difficult, stressful, anxious, unpredictable, easy, contains a rich future"* (A 43)
- 20) *"Die lewe is baie deurmekaar...ek moet besluite neem en ek is bang om besluite te neem. "Life is very confusing...I must make decisions and I am scared to make decisions"* (A49)
- 21) *"Ek is deurmekaar. Ek verstaan nie die waarde van die lewe nie. Ek is nog jonk" / "I am confused...I don't understand the value of life. I am still young"* (B1)
- 22) *(Image: Sad/happy face) "Happy / Unhappy"* (B16)
- 23) *"Die lewe is baie verwarrend en ingewikkeld. Mense speel 'n groot rol in hoe jy die lewe ervaar." / "Life is very confusing and complicated. People play a large role in how you experience life"* (B17)

- 24) *“Opwindend, onseker, gelukkig, deurmekaar, bang, onregverdig. Die lewe handel my nie reg nie” / Exciting, uncertain, happy, confusing, scared, unfair. Life is not treating me fairly” (B25)*
- 25) *“Die lewe is moeilik en gevaarlik, maar ook goed” / “Life is difficult and dangerous, but also good” (B25)*
- 26) *“Die lewe is deurmekaar – ek weet nie waar ek inpas nie” / “Life is very confusing – I don’t know where I fit in” (D17)*

Some participants expressed ambivalence in the way in which they live their lives morally.

- 27) *(Written on the T-shirt) “I believe in eternity. I love myself. I am at peace. I have good friends. I love to entertain people.” “Slut, worthless, ugly, death, gun, rape, divorce, abuse” (C1)*
- 28) *(Image – Christian Cross) (Image – inverted cross) “I feel like I am living two lives at school and over weekends”. Positive pressure: Academics, school, love, girls, my family. Negative pressure: Alone, need, fitting in, boys, rebel, experimenting, sex, lust. My double life is represented in my art” (C4)*

One participant’s response reflected ambivalence regarding what was drawn and written on the T-shirt and what was captured in the written explanation:

- 29) *(Image – “Middle finger sign”, “SHIT,”) Written explanation: “My life is great. (Ek lewe in ‘n lekker gemeenskap) I live in a great community. (Ek het awesome vriende en ‘n awesome pa) I have awesome friends and an awesome Dad.” (D12)*

Although many adolescents believed that life was difficult, some still indicated that it was something to be appreciated and to be grateful for. God was to be thanked for the gift of life.

- 30) *“Die lewe is nie altyd maklik nie, maar jy moet dankbaar wees” / “Life isn’t always easy, but you must be grateful” (A10)*
- 31) *“Die lewe is nie altyd ‘n lekker plek nie, maar dit is ‘n geskenk van God” / “Life is not always a nice place, but it is a gift of God” (A23)*

Some participants associated beliefs about life with insecurity about the future. Others indicated that uncertainty about the future renders life uncertain. This

uncertainty mostly centred on disturbances in the peer group and the challenge of preparing for a career.

- 32) *“Hoekom moet almal weggaan?” / “Why does everybody have to leave?” (A26)*
- 33) *“Onvoorspelbaar” / “Unpredictable” (A43)*
- 34) *“Life is a bitch. Dis soos ‘n bipolar persoon – jy weet nooit wat om te verwag nie’ / “Life’s a bitch. Life is like a bipolar person – you never know what to expect” (A48)*
- 35) *“Baie jongmense weet nie wat hulle eendag gaan doen nie. Dis deurmekaar – jy is deurmekaar oor wat met jou gaan gebeur” / “Many young people don’t know what they are going to do one day. It is confusing – you are confused about what will happen to you” (A4)*
- 36) *“Ek is onseker oor my toekoms. Dit maak my bang. Ek weet nie wat ek van my toekoms wil hê nie...Ek voel verward oor alles wat gaan gebeur. Dinge gebeur net te vining. Ek wil nie my ouers teleurstel nie, veral nie my Ouma nie” / “I am uncertain about my future. It scares me. I don’t know what I want from my future...I feel very confused about everything that is going to happen. Things are just happening too fast. I don’t want to disappoint my parents, especially not my Granny.” (A62)*
- 37) *“Ek weet nie hoe die lewe vir my in die toekoms gaan uitwerk nie” / “I don’t know how life is going to work out for me in future” (B5)*

Some of the responses referred to a growing realisation of mortality, which brings its own insecurity.

- 38) *“Life is not for ever” (C14)*
- 39) *“Wat gebeur more – geluk? Die dood? Hartseer” / “What happens tomorrow – happiness? Death? Sadness? (D: 14)*

Feelings of insecurity about the future emerged gradually and were often strongly linked to the lived experiences of the participants. They were particularly aware of the effect of external influences on their lives and sometimes were uncomfortable with the fact that they could not always control these external influences. The beliefs about external influences often had to do with whether or not they felt in control of a specific situation. It manifested in specific beliefs about external influences.



## 5.2.2 Beliefs about external influences

Beliefs about God and religion appeared to be a very strong and directive external influence on the minds of the participants. Beliefs about God's control over life, a higher power's predetermined plan, beliefs that we were created with predetermined potential, and beliefs in God as an enabling force in life, featured strongly. These beliefs were countered by beliefs about the devil as a disabling force. The influence of the environment also shaped the beliefs of many participants, especially beliefs about the effects of economic and social environments. A third category of external influences represented beliefs about the relations between the self and others. These external agents of influence were perceived to be peers, parents, the other who poses a threat to the self, economic injustice, racial injustice and gender inequality.

### 5.2.2.1 Beliefs about God and religion

A number of participants expressed the belief that God controls life according to a predetermined divine plan. One participant explicitly stated that one's lived experiences could not be ascribed to luck, but is predetermined. Religious determinism became a recurrent theme in the data.

- 40) *"If God decides that I am going to be [passage unclear] then I am going to be. It is not that I am lucky" (E17)*
- 41) *"Everything happens with a purpose: He (God) won't let you to it if he can't get you through it." (A1; A10)*

The belief that certain things happened with a pre-determined purpose occurred regularly and was often connected to a feeling that certain things are meant to be and others are not meant to be. It was also associated with the idea that specific things are meant for specific people and it cannot be otherwise.

- 42) *"Ek voel alles gebeur met 'n doel, As iets met jou moet gebeur, dan moet dit. As dit nie gebeur nie, dan moet dit deel wees van die groter plan dat dit nie met jou gebeur nie, maar met iemand anders. Iets kan nie met jou gebeur as dit bedoel was vir iemand anders nie" / "I feel everything happens with a purpose. If something has to happen to you, it has to. If it does not, then it must be part of the greater*

*plan that does not happen to you, but to someone else. Something cannot happen to you if it was meant for someone else" (A2)*

- 43) *"Ons is met 'n doel gebore. Niks gebeur per ongeluk nie. Ons is uniek en spesiaal. God het 'n plan met elkeen van ons" / "We were born with a purpose. Nothing happens by accident. We are unique and special. God has a plan with every one of us" (A3)*
- 44) *Alles gebeur met 'n doel en miskien is sekere dinge net nie vir sekere mense bedoel nie" / "Everything happens with a purpose and maybe certain things are just not meant for certain people" (A3)*
- 45) *"Alles gebeur met 'n doel al verstaan ek dit nie nou nie. God sal iets beter op my pad bring" / "Everything happens with a purpose, even if I don't understand it right now. God will give me something better on my way" (B25)*

One participant suggested that God created him in a set way which he had to accept as divinely determined. In order to cope, one has to accept this predetermined state.

- 46) *"Ek moet myself aanvaar soos God my gemaak het" / "I must accept myself as God created me" (A5)*

Some expressed a particular belief in a higher power that controls everything. They believed that they were subject to this control of which they had a positive view. Some stated that God is an enabling force in their lives who sustains and supports them. This knowledge also seemed to instill in them a belief in efficacy.

- 47) *"Ek dink daar is 'n groter mag, want jy kan nie op jou eie deur die lewe gaan nie. Niemand kan dit doen nie" / "I think there is a greater power, because you cannot go through life on your own. Nobody can do that" (A5)*
- 48) *"Ek dink jy moet op daai manier dink – soos dat daar iemand is wat actually na jou kyk" / "I feel you need that mind-set; like there is someone who actually watches over you" (A5)*
- 49) *"Ek glo God gee my nuwe hoop en help my" / "I trust God will give me new hope and help me" (D10)*
- 50) *"Let go, let God" (A6)*
- 51) *(Image – Christian cross) "Ek moet op iemand se skouer rus" / "I must rest on Someone's shoulder" (A7)*
- 52) *(Image – Bible) "Met God is alles moontlik" / "With God everything is possible" (A16)*
- 53) *"Die Here is my Herder. Ek het Hom nodig" / "The Lord is my shepherd. I need him" (D5)*

- 54) *"My lewe voel donker. God is my lig" / "My life feels dark. God is my light" (D15)*

A few participants believed that one can invoke God in prayer to influence certain things in life. This belief also seemed to add to beliefs of self-efficacy.

- 55) *"I was praying to God that my mother would buy me a cell phone" (E3)*  
 56) *"With God all things are possible. Without prayer you won't survive in life" (E4)*  
 57) *"I was always praying to God to give me a friend that makes me feel like I'm in heaven" (E9)*

Contrasting to beliefs about God were beliefs about the devil. The devil was seen as an antagonist to God (as the protagonist) or a disabling force.

- 58) *(Image: Christian Cross and pentagram) "God en die duiwel speel 'n rol in elke persoon. Jy glo in God of die duiwel" / "God and the devil play a role in each person. You believe in God or the devil" (D4)*  
 59) *(Image - Christian Cross/Pentagram) "Good and evil" God en die duiwel speel 'n belangrike rol in die lewe. Jy glo in God of die duiwel. Ek het 'n donker kant. Ek het seergekry" / "Good and evil". "God and the devil play an important part in life. You believe in God or the devil." "I have a dark side". "I was hurt" (D4)*  
 60) *(Image: Christian Cross and pentagram) "God en die duiwel speel 'n rol in elke persoon. Jy glo in God of die duiwel" / "God and the devil plays a role in each person. You believe in God or the devil" (D4)*  
 61) *"Die duiwel kry jou soms onder" / "The devil sometimes gets you down" (B20)*

One participant interpreted the behaviour of others as indicative of moral decay and a discrepancy between the morals of others and the practice of their lives.

- 62) *"Daar is nie meer waardes nie. Mense hou net godsdiens op Sondae" / "There are no values anymore. People only follow their religion on Sundays" (A43)*

### 5.2.2.2. Beliefs about the influence of the environment

Environmental changes seemed to pose a specific threat to some participants. These changes were believed to be agents in the economic and social environments and instrumental in creating feelings of insecurity. The pace at which the environment changes, was seen as a threat by some. The following statement explains:

- 63) *“The world is changing fast, if you don’t keep up, you are lost”*  
(C11)

Two participants noted the influence of their socio-economic environments on their ability to achieve their goals in life.

- 64) *“Jou omgewing beïnvloed jou besluite. Jou rykdom bepaal wat jy kan doen” / “Your environment influences your decisions – your wealth determines what you are able to do”*  
(A3)
- 65) *...or sometimes you find out there’s no hope for you to further your education, because we are confronted by the fact that we are poor in this family and there is no way that you can reach that high in education for there is no money for registration or licence or these things like...so you are always told to just finish grade 12 and then go to Pick & Pay and become a cashier. There is nothing that you can do to further your studies”* (E17)

Two participants held deterministic beliefs about the effect of the social environment in which they grow up. They felt that they were products of their circumstances and did not believe that they were able to rise above it.

- 66) *“Almal is nie sterk genoeg om bokant hulle omstandighede uit te styg nie. Ons omstandighede maak ons wie ons is” / “Everybody is not strong enough to rise above their circumstances. Our circumstances determine who we are”*  
(A5)
- 67) *“Sometimes you grow up in a family where there is a lot of fighting and separation going on. Then you just look at everything from a negative aspect and you don’t have proper guidance because your parents are always fighting and you don’t have a proper foundation, so you don’t know what’s the right way”* (C2)

The social environment in which adolescents grow up also seemed to determine their moral choices and attitudes towards life.

- 68) *"I think the morals of the society that you live in can influence your life. Society's morals become your morals and that determine where you are bound to go" (C1)*
- 69) *"Sometimes when you are with someone who has a negative attitude in life, it rubs off on you ...you also start to think negatively because you are in their company" (C2)*

### **5.2.2.3. Beliefs about the relations between the self and others**

Some participants considered the influence of others on the self as negative. A number of participants considered themselves affected by the social judgement of the other.

- 70) *(Image: Blood stains) "My fears and what I hide" "I am a cunt" "I am a bad boy" (C9)*
- 71) *"Don't judge me" (D17)*
- 72) *"People want to believe bad things about you" (C14)*
- 73) *"Sekere onderwysers...as hulle aanmekaar jou naam noem. Dan weet jy jy het niks gemaak nie en as jy met hulle redeneer dan sê hulle jy moenie terugpraat nie. En as jy nou weer soos 'n normale mens is, dan sê hulle weer: "Dja, jou daggaroeker en as jy nou wil aangaan en ligsinnig wees..." – dji weet nie waar om te wees nie" / "Some educators...when they are calling your name all the time. Then you know you didn't do anything and when you argue with them, they tell you not to back-chat. And if you behave like a normal person, then they say: You dope-smoker...you just want to carry on and be frivolous – you don't know where to be (D5)*
- 74) *They think that if you are poor, you are poor in mind so they won't give you that chance to show them or that chance to go forward and prove that you are able to go past the background that you are coming from" (E1)*

Peer networks were often noted as a prominent external influence. Social media networks were seen as one of the environments in which peers had a profound influence.

- 75) *"Ek is verslaaf aan my selfoon en spandeer die meeste van my tyd op sosiale netwerke" / "I am addicted to my cell phone and spend most of my time on the social networks." (D18)*

A learner expressed that in her community, attending school was often seen as a sign of weakness. The expression of this perception by peers seemed to be a significant influence.

- 76) *“Peer pressure. If you are outside of school with friends they will say you are such a mama’s boy, you can’t go to school” (E17)*

It seemed as if some participants were affected by the degeneration of their peer network. This affected their perception of how they were seen by others, as well as the development or decline of trust in emotionally invested relationships.

- 77) *“Don’t be fake – be yourself” (A6)*  
 78) *“Ek weet nie hoekom mense kak praat agter jou rug nie” / “I don’t know why people talk shit behind your back” (A44)*  
 79) *“Jy gee om vir iemand en dan los hy jou oor iets op Facebook en dan maak hy kak op oor jou” / “One cares about someone, then he leaves you because of something on Facebook and then he makes up shit about you” (A61)*  
 80) *“Afpersing, oneerlike vriende, beledigings - jy kan niemand vertrou nie” / “Blackmail, dishonest friends, insults - you cannot trust anybody” (B12)*  
 81) *(Image: “FAKE”) People are lying about themselves – friends, family and at school” (C14)*

Some participants expressed the fact that their low beliefs about the trustworthiness of peers caused them to withdraw from social interaction.

- 82) *“I am who I am – I don’t need to fit in with friends” (A18)*  
 83) *“Ek is wie ek is en niemand kan my verander nie” / “I am who I am and nobody can change me” (A22)*  
 84) *“Ek hou nie van mense nie, want jy weet nie wie is jou ware vriende nie. Daarom is ek ‘n alleenloper” / “I don’t like people, because you don’t know who your true friends are. That’s why I am a loner” (B24)*

Inability to meet the expectations of others seemed to have a detrimental effect on the self-beliefs, choices and motivation of the participants. They experienced their inability to meet the expectations of others as pressure.

- 85) *“Jy kan nie altyd die dinge doen wat mense van jou verwag nie. Jy probeer, maar dis nie maklik nie en as jy misluk, hulle blameer jou en is teleurgesteld in jou” / “You can’t always do the things people expect of you. You are trying,*



- but it's not that easy and if you fail, they blame you and are disappointed in you" (A2)*
- 86) *"Partykeer is die druk te veel. Dan kies jy maar die maklikste opsie, die maklikste pad uit – en dis nie noodwendig die regte pad nie" / "Sometimes the pressure is too much. Then you take the easiest option, the easiest way out – and it is not necessarily the right way" (A3)*

However, the pressures of life seemed to be made easier by important support structures in their lives, such as the role that family and their parents play in their lives.

- 87) *(Image: "Friends" "Family" "God") "My lewe draai om vriende, familie en God: Vriende wat daar is vir my, familie wat ek liefhet" / "My life revolves around friends, family and God: Friends who are there for me and family whom I love" (A7)*
- 88) *"Ek het goeie ouers, goeie opleiding, 'n goeie skool en goeie vriende vir hulp" / "I have good parents, good education, a good school and good friends who help me" (A16)*
- 89) *"Family and friends bring happiness" (A23)*
- 90) *Ons familie en vriende wie vir ons bystaan en met wie ons onself omring het ook 'n invloed op die keuses wat ons maak en wat mense van ons dink. Hulle sê mos jy word bepaal deur jou vriende..." / Our family and friends who support us and who are around us also have an influence on the choices we make and what people think of us. They say that you are determined by you friends..." (D4)*
- 91) *(Image: "Peace sign/flower") "I feel good because of the love I am getting from my mother" (E1)*
- 92) *"I am so happy because of the love I am getting from my parents and my church family (E8)*

However, the fear of disappointing those whom you deeply value also seemed to create emotional pressure at times. One participant expressed the fear of disappointing his parents, because he deeply values them.

- 93) *"Ek wil my ouers trots maak, maar ek het negatiewe gevoelens. Ek is baie deurmekaar oor wat gaan gebeur. My ouers is wonderlik – ek wil hulle nie teleurstel nie. " / "I want to make my parents proud, but I have negative feelings. I am very confused about what is going to happen. My parents are wonderful and I do not want to disappoint them" (A62)*

One participant expressed amazement at a friend's desire to please her parents and responded negatively to the fact.

- 94) *Sometimes people just work hard to please their parents...like my own friend, she always doesn't do what she likes to do; if it doesn't meet her parents' expectations (passage unclear) she probably thinks: Would my parents appreciate me if I get an A or an honours blazer? (C8)*

It seemed that parental pressure and expectations could be detrimental to the emotional health of adolescents. This participant expressed his dejection and despondency stemming from his poor relationship with his parents. To his mind, parental judgement made life difficult.

- 95) *"Partykeer is die lewe moeilik. Ek voel soms asof ek nie meer will lewe nie. Miskien moet ek selfmoord pleeg. My ouers laat my sukkel met baie goed. Dit sal beter wees as ek dood is. Ek is net in die pad. Hulle sien net wat ek verkeerd doen" / "Sometimes life is difficult. I sometimes feel as if I don't want to live anymore. Maybe I should commit suicide. My parents make me struggle with many things. It will be better if I die. I am just in the way. They only see what I am doing wrong" (D21)*

When marital concord disintegrates in the home, the adolescent may perceive his misdoings of the past as the reason, as one participant stated:

- 96) *"Not good enough...alone...my Dad left me" (C3)*

It is not only the physical absence of parents that seemed to affect adolescents negatively, but also the real absence of parental support or the perception of a lack of parental support. In some participants this affected a low belief that they would be able to attain their goals in life, especially academic goals such as completing their high school career and being successful at school.

- 97) *"Is she really is my mother, why does she not satisfy me. I am her child" (E2)*  
98) *"There are bad things that make you to want to give up – if at home you are not treated well...if your mother keeps telling you that you'll never succeed...and then you ask yourself: What am I going to do at school, because my mother already told me that I am not going to succeed. So I will just sit down and do nothing (E8)*



- 99) *“Suddenly your family is not supporting you at school, but they always tell you that you must do well at your schoolwork – that makes you feel bad” (E4)*

Parental support to attain one’s goals may have been perceived as inadequate, but parental intervention in the process of finding one’s identity was seen as inappropriate by some. Some participants uttered the belief that one sometimes has to contradict the will of one’s parents as a statement of independence.

- 100) *“Ek dink jy moet jou eie pad volg en nie na ander mense luister nie, selfs al is hulle jou ouers. Soms weet hulle beter, maar dikwels het hulle nie ‘n clue wat aangaan nie. Soms moet jy net vir jouself sê: Ek kan dit doen” / “I think you must follow your own way and not listen to others, even if they are your parents. Sometimes they do know better, but often they don’t have a clue what is going on. Sometimes you must just tell yourself: I can do it” (A5)*
- 101) *They still live in the past. They believe you must be home at six ‘o clock. We are now old enough to make our own decisions; we are big enough to make our own decisions. Yes, we make the wrong choices, but then we take the blame. They tell us not to do this or that, but we are going to, because we feel we make our own decisions and because they tell us not to do it, we will do the opposite, because then we know we did what we wanted to...and they just don’t get it! Our parents don’t have enough trust in how they raised us – they never trust us to take responsibility and make the right choices. Now we deliberately go against their wishes to show them that we can make our own decisions” (D3)*
- 102) *“Your parents are there to guide you and set you on the right path to say ‘hey, this is where you should be going and if that is what it is, you’re OK. So they can let you make your own choices. But sometimes your parents choose things for you that you don’t like, like your subjects” (C2)*

However, some participants recognised the constructive influence of their parents. One female participant noted how much she was influenced by her mother and how similar her opinions were to her mother’s.

- 103) *“I know my views and opinions are, well, not very different to the views of like, my mom whom I live with” (C1)*

The following group of participants voiced the perception that negative encounters with others in life often cause them to view life and others as unfair and hurtful.

- 104) *"Familie en vriende maak jou ongelukkig. Hulle maak jou fokken seer. Daar is mense wat die lewe onaangenaam maak" / "Family and friends make you unhappy. They fucking hurt you a lot. There are people who make life unpleasant" (A23)*
- 105) *"Die lewe is onredelik en slaan jou partykeer hard" / "Life is unreasonable and hits you hard sometimes" (B3)*
- 106) *"My world stinks big. People are messing it up. People are hurting me all the time." (B7)*
- 107) *(Image – knife with blood dripping from blade) "Ek is ongelukkig in die skool en in die klas. Ander mense sit te veel druk op my" / "I am unhappy in school and in the class. Other people put too much pressure on me." (B16)*
- 108) *"Unfair – people are judgmental. Nothing happens to people who are unfair, but those who do the right thing never get rewarded." (C3)*
- 109) *"Life is full of bullshit because of what other people say and do" (C14)*
- 110) *"Life is a big disaster, because it is destroyed by our own people. People just get hurt by the things other people do." (E2)*

Violent acts, often associated with crime in their communities, were seen as an increasing threat to their safety and security. Some expressed a perpetual feeling of 'dread' that has become part of daily life in South Africa.

- 111) *"Ek stem saam dat ek onveilig voel. As mens kyk na wat in die buurt aangaan wanneer hulle inbreek. 'n Vrou of 'n man kan nie meer alleen wees nie – jy verwag soort van dat jy aangeval gaan word. Jy kan nie meer alleen in die natuur wees nie...dis so onveilig...en dit raak erger" / "I agree that I feel unsafe. If one looks at what is going on in the neighbourhood when they break in. A woman or a man cannot be alone – you sort of expect to be attacked. You can't be alone in nature...it is so unsafe...and it just gets worse" (A6)*
- 112) *(Image – "BANG" Afrikaans for "SCARED") "Ek is bang oor al die goed wat in ons land gebeur – verkragting, inbrake, dwelmmisbruik. Alles gebeur net meer en meer in die land. Jy kan nie meer alleen loop nie. Misdaad is oral. Dit maak my bang" / "I am scared of all the things happening in our country – rape, burglary, drug abuse. All these things happen more and more in the country. You cannot walk alone anymore. Crime is on the rise. It scares me." (A41)*
- 113) *"Al die dinge in die land wat jou siek maak – afpersing, oneerlikheid, beledigings, misdaad, verkragting" / "All the things in the country that makes you sick – blackmail, dishonesty, insults, crime, rape." (B12)*

- 114) *"You are always watching your back on your way to and from school" (C3)*
- 115) *"You can't even ride your bike during the day without worrying who's behind you" (C4)*
- 116) *"The fact that I can't walk to the 7/11 alone without the fear of being abducted or raped" (C8)*
- 117) *"Daar was baie min misdaad in ons dorp, maar nou het ons moord, verkragting, seksuele molestering...mense wat mekaar met messe steek...jy kan nie meer alleen loop nie. En dit was nie so nie" / "There was very little crime in our town, but now we have murder, rape, sexual abuse...people stabbing each other with knives...you can't walk alone anymore. It wasn't like that" (D4)*
- 118) *"Ek voel bang en onrustig...onveilig" / "I feel scared, uneasy...unsafe" (D8)*

One participant mentioned that the perception of the other as a violent threat is reinforced by regular coverage in the electronic media such as television.

- 119) *"I feel so bad and scared because most of the time you hear from television that people are being raped and children are being abused at a young age" (E4)*

A current social discourse in South African society occurred in some of the responses: Affluent and prominent people are not treated equally in social structures such as the legal processes of the country. Two participants alluded to the seemingly unequal treatment of prominent social and political figures in prison.

- 120) *"Perception of people with status are being treated differently, specifically the case of Jub-Jub<sup>12</sup> who is a star and was racing under the influence of drugs. It is sad that he is treated differently from our prisoners" (E3)*
- 121) *"In this case...Tony Yengeni<sup>13</sup>...my brother was in the prison with him and he wasn't eating with the other prisoners, he was eating food from outside" (E4)*

---

<sup>12</sup> Jub-Jub is the name of a kwaito music star who took part in a drag race against a friend while under the influence of chemical substances. Two teenagers were killed when he lost control over his vehicle. The research participant is referring to him being treated differently from other prisoners because he is a celebrity (Timeslive, <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2013/09/14/jub-jub-s-bail-denied>).

<sup>13</sup> Tony Yengeni is a politician known for his extravagant life-style who was imprisoned on several criminal charges. He was detained in a new correctional facility and only served a part of his sentence (Mail & Guardian, <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-08-13-tony-yengeni-struggle-veteran-to-flawed-politician>; News24, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Review-Yengeni-parole-DA-20071126>).

One participant held the belief that nepotism and corruption were prevalent in society which is depriving young people of opportunities.

- 122) *“Yes, It does, because most cases if I’m like...I’m not pretty, wealthy or maybe not much poor, but I am in the middle, and after I finished school, there are bursaries, but the bursaries – most of the times there’s corruption about who will get them– a family member or a relative will get that bursary instead of you despite the goods that you have got. So if you are from a poor background, people look down on you.” (E1)*

The perception of privileged people obtaining their wealth by nepotism and corruption sometimes led to stereotyping of affluent people. One participant explained about the stereotyping of more affluent children in her community, distinguishing between affluent children from other groups and black children who perceived themselves as being unfairly disadvantaged.

- 123) *“As for wealthy kids, we as blacks call them spoiled brats and say he’s a mama’s boy or something like that, because they are treated differently from us.... (E1)*

Another adolescent mentioned that she experienced racial bias in the community where she lived, especially regarding the employment of certain groups.

- 124) *“...it depends in which part of the country you are. Here in the Western Cape you find that most people who are employed in shops are coloureds, even if they advertise a post, they specify the language that you are speaking and it is always Afrikaans. I think it is still about race, especially in the Western Cape, but not in the whole of South Africa” (E2)*

Two adolescents explained how their particular group has remained disadvantaged despite the socio-political changes in South Africa. They mentioned how this phenomenon caused them to lose motivation.

- 125) *“In die verlede was ons nie wit genoeg nie, nou is ons nie swart genoeg nie” / “In the past we were not white enough, now we are not black enough” (A3)*
- 126) *“Ons almal hier is bruin mense. Onder apartheid was ons nie goed genoeg onder die wit regering nie, nou in die nuwe Suid-Afrika is ons nie goed genoeg onder die swart regering nie. Ons weet nie waar ons moet wees nie. Ons is nooit aanvaarbaar vir enige iets nie. Ons sal altyd in die middle wees. Selfs al het ons goeie kwalifikasies sal ons altyd vir*

*ander moet terugstaan” / “We are all coloured people here. Under apartheid we were not good enough under the white government, now in the new South Africa we are not good enough under the black government. We don’t know where we should be...we are never acceptable for anything. We will always be in the middle. Even if we have good qualifications we will always have to stand back for others” (D6)*

Another participant indicated that his group was disadvantaged by the broad policy of affirmative action. He felt to be disadvantaged by discrimination experienced in the selection of provincial rugby teams on the basis of a racial quota system. Being a dedicated sportsman, he felt aggrieved that he was denied an opportunity because of the colour of his skin. The same participant expressed deep disgust with the system of affirmative action. His response culminated violently in a death-wish for an important icon of the political freedom struggle.

- 127) *“Byvoorbeeld, by Grant Khomo of sulke geleenthede, daar moet mense van kleur in die span wees en die wit speler moet terugstaan selfs al is hy die beste. Vir my is dit onregverdig...dit maak mens negatief, jy wil nie meer oefen nie...sulke goed” / “For example at Grant Khomo (interprovincial rugby week) or those occasions, there must be people of colour in the team and the white player must be left out of the team even if he is the best. To me it is unfair...it makes one negative, you don’t want to train anymore...things like that”*  
*“Jy het dieselfde opvoeding as iemand anders, maar hulle sal hom altyd eerste kies oor sy kleur” / “You have the same education as someone else, but they will always pick him first because of his colour”*  
*“Ek dink dis baie moeilik vir ‘n wit persoon om werk te kry in Suid-Afrika, veral omdat hulle ‘n swart persoon bokant jou gaan aanstel” / “I think it is very difficult to find work in South Africa as a white person, especially because they will select a black person ahead of you”*  
*“Mense wat gekies word vir kleur (affirmative action in sports teams) is ‘n pot kak. Ek wens Mandela kan nou net vrek” (English translation – People who are selected on the basis of colour (of their skin) is a load of shit. I wish Mandela (Nelson Mandela) dies.” (A44)*

A member of another group expressed disgust over the application of the policy of affirmative action and how it left her helpless and without hope to affect a positive outcome for herself in her own country.

- 128) *Ek voel kwaad, want hier het jy hard gewerk en jou beste probeer, want jy weet dis moeilik daar buite...en dan hoor jy baie skole en universiteite gee voorkeur aan swart mense. Dis nie regverdig nie. Die een wat die beste gedoen het en die beste kwalifikasies het moet die werk kry."/ "I feel angry, because here you have worked hard and you try your best because you know it is difficult out there...and then you hear many schools and universities give preference to black people. It is not fair. The one who did the best and has the best qualifications must get the job. "Dit help nie eers om te probeer nie...ons sal nooit suksesvol wees in ons eie land nie" / "It doesn't help to even try...we will never be successful in our own country (D7)*

It seemed that the negative perceptions about different race groups are transferred from an older generation to a younger generation by the way in which they speak of the other, as the following participant suggested.

- 129) *"Parents influence us and tell us things like in apartheid parents told us like a black person is not someone to talk to or that he is inferior and now you kind of associate it still in that way with a person – like still look down on that person, for instance" (C3)*

One participant noted that gender stereotyping was still denying people opportunities in the work place, especially as far as the perception exists that certain jobs or positions should be reserved for a specific gender.

- 130) *"Stereotiperings neem nog steeds mense se geleenthede weg. Sommige mense dink nog steeds dat sekere tipes werk net vir 'n sekere geslag bedoel is" / "Stereotyping still denies people opportunities. Some people still think that certain types of work are meant for a specific gender" (A6)*

Another participant argued that gender inequality was still particularly evident in the way in which teenage mothers had to shoulder all the responsibility while the fathers of their children took no or very little responsibility.

- 131) *"Die meisies in die skool raak swanger en moet dan die skool verlaat om na die baba te kyk, maar die pa van die kind verloor niks nie en neem ook nie verantwoordelikheid nie."/ "The girls in the school get pregnant and have to leave school to look after the baby, but the father of the child does not lose anything or take any responsibility" (B5)*





### 5.2.3 Beliefs of self-agency

Beliefs about self-efficacy centred on beliefs of freedom of the will within a greater plan, as well as fixed beliefs about one's own potential. It seemed as if the latter beliefs were caused by the participants' perceptions of how they were perceived by others. The source of these perceptions seemed to be based on feedback from others.

#### 5.2.3.1 Beliefs about own efficacy

Beliefs about self-agency sometimes seemed to be embedded in other beliefs. Specific beliefs about own efficacy seemed to be derived from other beliefs about the influence or control of a higher power – in other words, beliefs in God as an enabling force.

- 132) *(Image: "Dragon" "No fear" "Christian cross") "Die draak beteken ek het selfvertroue en ek is nie bang vir uitdagings nie. Ek aanvaar myself soos die Here my geskape het" / "The dragon means I have self-confidence and I am not afraid of challenges. I accept myself as God has created me" (A5)*
- 133) *"It is better to be a first-hand version of yourself than a second-hand version of someone else" (E15)*

Participants' believed that the visualisation of a successful future would be instrumental in the actual attainment of success.

- 134) *"What you say and believe it reflects what you are going to be in the future" (E1)*
- 135) *"It depends on what you think you are going to be in future. It depends on what you think you are going to do (passage unclear) and what you are going to be" (E: 2)*
- 136) *"If I believe in myself that I am going to be a star or whatever, then I will do whatever it takes for me to reach that high" (E: 2)*

Beliefs about high self-efficacy seem to be maintained by positive self-talk in some adolescents.



- 137) *“Moenie dat onnodige goed in die lewe jou onderkry nie. Bly positief en sterk” / “Don’t let unnecessary things in life get you down. Stay positive and strong” (A2)*
- 138) *(Image: Extra set of clothing with T-shirt) “Om myself teen pyn te beskerm. Al is ek gekonfronteer met druk, sê ek vir myself: Ek is nog steeds sterk genoeg” / “To protect myself against pain. Even if I am confronted with pressure, I tell myself: I am still strong enough” (A7)*
- 139) *“Glo in jouself – alles gebeur met ‘n rede. Just keep smiling en hou aan probeer” / “Believe in yourself – everything happens for a reason. Just keep smiling and keep on trying (A12)*
- 140) *“If you are positive, people will see that you are positive and if you have things to do, people will help you to do it, because they see that you are really positive about it” (C4)*
- 141) *“I believe that whatever you say or believe in is how it is gonna end. If you believe you are a failure you will end as a failure, but if I believe that I will make a success, I will act towards success in life. What you say and believe it reflects what you are going to be in the future” (E1)*
- 142) *“It depends on what you think you are going to be in future. It depends on what you think you are going to do (passage unclear) and what you are going to be. If I believe in myself that I am going to be a star or whatever, then I will do whatever it takes for me to reach that high” (E2)*
- 143) *“Quitters never win and winners never quit” (E4)*

One learner based her positive mind-set on former experiences of success.

- 144) *“I am so happy because I passed all my exams at school” (E6)*

Some participants believed that the likely attainment of success was connected with one’s willingness to accept responsibility for the potential outcomes of one’s life. This was represented in a strong perception of self-agency.

- 145) *“Elke besluit wat jy neem veroorsaak ‘n nuwe uitkoms. Dit hang af van die keuses wat jy in jou lewe gemaak het” / “Every decision you make produces a new outcome. It depends on the choices you have made in your life” (A4)*
- 146) *“So dit hang alles af van jou keuse en hoe dit jou lewe gaan beïnvloed” / “So everything depends on your choice and how it will influence your future” (A5)*

- 147) *“As jy hard werk, kan jy bo uitkom” / “If you work hard, you can reach the top” (B1)*
- 148) *“I think you have control over your life. You have your own spiritual commitment or balance and you are in control of where you are destined to be” (C8)*
- 149) *“Yes, It does, because if you think that you are not good in any way, or if you have an attitude to a certain teacher or a certain subject, you end up seeing that you are failing the subject instead of passing it, because you are negligent against it (passage unclear) So if you are telling yourself: No, I’m gonna pass this, that power that is in you does come out and you do more and more and you can surprise yourself sometimes” (E17)*

The ability to resist defeat in adverse circumstances seemed to be instrumental in the cognitive construction of beliefs about self-efficacy and resilience.

- 150) *Baie kinders sê: Ek kan nie skool toe gaan nie, want my ouers het nie geld nie. As jy bereid is om hard te werk is daar opsies soos beurse. Jy moenie voel asof jou hande vasgemaak is nie en dat jy niks daaraan kan doen nie. Jy het opsies” / “Many children say: I can’t go to school, because my parents don’t have money. If you want to work hard, there are options like scholarships. You should not feel as if your hands are tied and that you can do nothing about it. You have options (A7)*

### 5.3.2.2 Beliefs about self- efficacy based on perceptions of others

Beliefs of low self-efficacy seemed to be based on negative feedback or the lack of positive feedback from others.

- 151) *“Ek dink dis net die verkeerde invloed – as daar net rerig iemand was om hulle te motiveer en vir hulle te sê hulle kan dit doen en dan sal hulle kan cope en sal hulle probeer” / “I think it is just the wrong influence – if there really was someone to motivate them and to tell them that they can do it, they would be able to cope and they will try” (A6)*
- 152) *“Ek moet besluite neem. Ek wil nie in ‘n inrigting opeindig soos my oudste broer nie – iemand met niks rigting in die lewe nie wat elke dag moet bedel vir R1 vir ‘n smoke” / “I have to make decisions. I don’t want to end up in an institution like my eldest brother – someone who has no direction in life and has to beg for R1 every day to buy a smoke. I am scared of my life after school.” (A49)*
- 153) *“I am so glad it came up...if someone like a teacher tells you like at school you are a failure, it’s like you are not having a good reputation, at school you are always a failure, like then...you give up...” (E3)*
- 154) *“There are bad things that make you to want to give up – if at home you are not treated well...if your mother keeps telling you that you’ll never succeed...and then you ask yourself: What am I going to do at school, because my mother already told me that I am not going to succeed. So I will just sit down and do nothing (E8)”*

Other participants held beliefs of low self-efficacy based on of fixed theories about one’s own intellectual and personal potential.

- 155) *“Dis hoe jy gebore is as jy so is. Dit gaan nie oor geluk nie...dis hoe jy is. Jy kan dit nie help nie, daarom is dit niemand se skuld nie” / “It is how you were born if you are like that. It’s not about luck..this is how you are. You can’t help it, therefore it is nobody’s fault” (A4)*
- 156) *“Sommige mense gee net op. Hulle gee nie meer om nie. Dit help nie om met hulle te praat nie, want hulle gee net nie meer om nie. Of hulle gee nog om, maar hulle voel hulle kan dit nie doen nie, so hoekom moet hulle probeer” / “Some people just give up. They don’t care anymore. It does not help to talk to them, they just don’t care. Or, they still care, but they feel that they can’t do it, so why should they try (A5)*
- 157) *“Dis nie hulle fout nie, maar hulle laat alles so maklik lyk terwyl jy moet sukkel” / “It’s not their fault, but they make everything look so easy, while you have to struggle” (A5)*

- 158) *“Sommige mense kry alles so maklik. Sommige mense moet hard werk om iets te bereik en ander kry dit so maklik in die skool” / “Some people have everything so easy. Some people have to work hard to achieve and others get it so easily in school” (A6)*
- 159) *“Gee vining moed op, maak baie foute” / “I give up easily and make a lot of mistakes” (A19)*
- 160) *“It’s amazing, when you do well, people are labelling you. You don’t want to be known as this person with his head stuck in a book 24/7 and you don’t want to do badly so you end up being...in-between” (C1)*
- 161) *I think some people are born with natural abilities to be good at accounting, for example. I am not good at accounting, so I am on the other side! Because I have to do it, I don’t understand it, so I don’t want to do it. They come to school to say, well, I am not the cleverest person so I am just not going to work. The problem is that you get so frustrated at yourself because you just cannot do what you want to do, that you just go back (C5)*
- 162) *“I think your sense of how you look physically will impact on where you go in life, because you can be good looking and very popular at school, but if you are ugly, then people can...not like you. If you have a low self-esteem, you can’t be confident. You can be seen to not be confident, like, if you want to become a public speaker, but you don’t have the confidence because you are judged on how you look” (C8)*
- 163) *“I am struggling in Maths” (E12)*

Some participants held the belief of compatibilism or soft determinism – the belief that, within a greater plan designed by a higher power, you still maintain freedom of will (agency) to make your own choices.

- 164) *Jy maak jou eie besluite, want God gee vir jou die keuse, maar dinge verander met elke besluit wat jy neem, of dit volgens sy plan is of nie, soos jy jou eie pad volg” / “You make your own decisions, because God gives you a choice, but things change with every decision that you make, whether it is according to God’s plan or not, as you follow your own way (A3)”*
- 165) *“He gives us a plan, but he also gives us options about what you are planning today and what you are going to do with your future” (A3)*
- 166) *“He helps you, but in the end it is your choice” (A4)*
- 167) *God gives you the liberty to make your own choices: “I made you in a certain way and I am not going to force my will upon you” (A5)*

## 5.4 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

### 5.4.1 Beliefs about life

As argued before, cognitive processes that constitute adolescent fatalism may be rooted in beliefs (Shen et al., 2009, p.3), as previously indicated in in Section 1.1 and in Section 2.1.1. From this inquiry, three main themes emerged: Beliefs about life; beliefs about the influence of the environment; and beliefs about self- efficacy based on perceptions of others. I discussed the data using the themes as markers under which I presented the data.

The first theme, beliefs about life, was supported by three data categories: positive beliefs, negative beliefs and ambivalent beliefs. The sub-categories underpinning these beliefs are: life is good; life is bad; life is confusing and, life is negative and positive. These data categories resonate strongly with the notion of Albert Bandura's triarchic reciprocal causality as discussed in Section 2.3. The data categories especially endorse the interwoven nature of the personal, environmental and behavioural factors in the lives of adolescents.

In the section on positive beliefs it appeared that adolescents are often content with life and who they are. Additional to the positive evaluation of the self as an agent in life, the agency of others were often viewed in a positive light, especially where it related to positive actions by others that affected a good outcome for the participants. The reason for this could possibly be found in positive life experiences [3; 4] at the time of the data collection or may indicate a general satisfaction with life at the time. For example, part of the general feeling of well-being may be the fact that they are academically successful and have a sense of academic attainment [144] (Botha, 2013, p. 12).

Negative beliefs of life were often rooted in the perception of the loss of agency and control. Literature discussed in Sections 2.1 and 2.2 support this particular finding (Cary, 2007, p. 166; Lukes, 1967, p. 138), believing the self to be submitted to a negative external force [6; 7; 11; 12; 13], in other words, a profound belief of an external locus of control (Neff and Hoppe, 1993; as cited by Shen et al., 2009, p. 2). Negative beliefs may be rooted in the fact that the loss of control alienates one from

one's lived experiences (Powe, 1995, p.1356; Acevedo, 2005, p. 78), causing one to disengage [6; 7; 14] or feel alienated from life because one believes life, or aspects of life, have no meaning (West, 1993 as cited in Powe, 1995, p.1356). In this regard, see also the arguments pertaining to alienation by Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx as it has been discussed in Chapter 2.2.2.

Negative perceptions about life were often brought about by the belief that life circumstances and experiences have a negative influence [7; 8; 13; 14] on self-agency and efficacy (Bandura, 2007 as cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p. 399; Steinberg, 2008, p. 11) (See Section 3.2.1.1 in this regard). This perceived loss of control stripped life of its meaning. Negative life experiences sometimes created the belief that life had no value or meaning, resulting in deep feelings of helplessness (Bernard, et al., 2011, p. 3; Seligman, 1975, cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p. 445), disappointment, hopelessness and angst [6; 7; 10; 14] (Bernard, et al., 2011, p. 3). Beliefs that one is left hopeless and helpless by circumstances or events may have led to beliefs of inefficacy [6; 7] to affect a positive outcome anymore (Bandura, 1994, p. 71; Bandura et al., 2003, pp. 769-780). Low self-efficacy beliefs were connected to mental defeat [6; 7; 9; 14] (Jardien & Collett, 2006, as cited in Bray et al., 2010, p. 308) and loss of motivation (Woolfolk, 2013, p. 442). It also suggested disengagement from life itself (Bernard, et. al., 2011, p. 3). Beliefs of low self-efficacy were associated with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness that could be typical of a fatalistic mind-set in which one is unable to affect one's circumstances (Whelan, 1996 as cited in Bernard, et al., 2011, p. 1). This finding links strongly with Bandura's triarchic reciprocal causality discussed in Section 2.3 with its strong focus on the effect of the environment on the individual (also see Figure 2.7).

It was quite common among the learners, when they became aware of their own feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and loss of meaning, to turn to God as a cognitive corrective of their own negative beliefs in order to gain a sense of security (47 - 54) (Strinati, 2000, p. 238). Beliefs about God as helper in life were a common thread in the data [47 - 57]. Please refer to Section 2.2.1.2 in the literature review for support of this finding. To some learners, specific beliefs of God provided an essential coping strategy. To many others their own cognitive strategies (e.g., ability to cope) were inadequate, shaping beliefs in low self-efficacy to cope which life [6; 7

9; 14], which rendered them extremely vulnerable (De Minzi, 2003, p. 238; Coleman & Hagell, 2007, pp. 3-7; Yeager & Dweck, 2012, p. 303). Low coping skills may, in such cases, lead to fatalism (Whelan, 1996 as cited in Bernard et al., 2011, p. 1).

Presenting domestic problems or a disturbed relationship with parents as a reason for mental defeat or fatalistic beliefs [6] could be seated in perceived past and present life experiences [6; 7; 67; 95] and/or in a greater yearning for independence [100; 101] (Swanson et al., 2010, p. 94) and finding one's own identity, which is common to the developmental stage of adolescence (Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429). Nevertheless, it seemed that the participants' beliefs of inefficacy to bring change to negative circumstances in which their parents played a role, may have left them vulnerable and hopeless [95 - 99]. This was also reflected in the literature discussed in Section 3.4.1.3 pertaining to the influence of the lack of parental/caregiver supervision. These feelings of hopelessness because of parental behaviour could be regarded as fatalism (Whelan, 1996, as cited in Bernard et al., 2011, p. 1).

The data revealed quite a number of ambivalent responses that could be rooted in various sources. First of all, adolescence is a time of ambivalence, of being caught in limbo between childhood and adulthood [21; 26] (Sokol, 2009, pp. 3-4). It is a time of finding one's own identity (Coleman & Hagell, 2007, p. 3). It is a time of great flux and uncertainty [19 – 28] determined by many personal, environmental and behavioural influences (Coleman & Hagell, 2007, p. 3). The ambivalence noted in the data may also be ascribed to the fact that the research participants had very little prior experience of thinking and reasoning about their views on life. During the inquiry their own thought processes often took on the characteristics of a brain storming exercise rather than a structured process of reflection, reflective of what Beck (2011) calls automatic thoughts (see Section 2.3), when people react without thinking too much or too hard about own beliefs. Many of these automatic beliefs could originate in popular discourses embedded in a specific *zeitgeist*. The participants' own feelings may have been in conflict with the current *zeitgeist* from which they are not able to escape – this might have caused the ambivalent responses at times. Some of the ambivalent responses may also stem from the fact that they have in fact been experiencing enabling and disabling events



simultaneously [24], for example, living in a safe home, but perceiving life outside of the home as dangerous.

The data revealed ambivalence in the thoughts of some learners about the self, especially the self as moral being [27; 28]. This could possibly be ascribed to the fact that their sense of self and identity might still be developing (McAdamset al., 2006, in Sokol, 2009, p. 4). This could be reflections of their increased ability for abstract thinking ((Piaget, 1950, Piaget & Inhelder, 1973); Dupree, in: Swanson et al., 2010, p. 65). One need to bear in mind that this developmental process is not yet completed and could affect the way in which they make meaning of the world and social relations. It also could affect the way in which they deal with social, moral and emotional issues as they develop (Donald et al., 2010, p. 54). One could therefore expect fluctuation in their thinking and responses and, indeed, ambivalence.

These feelings of confusion and disorientation [21 - 37] about life (Erikson, 1968, as cited in Sokol, 2009, pp. 3-4) may come with the awareness that, although they are striving to be independent, and on their way to adulthood, they are still inexperienced with a limited set of coping strategies (Donald et al., 2010, pp. 64-65). Adolescence is a time of establishing one's social identity; however, being caught up between childhood and adolescence [21; 26] complicates this process (Coleman & Hagell, 2007, p. 3). These feelings of confusion and disorientation are consistent with the literature discussed in Section 3.2, especially pertaining to the developmental theories of Erikson and Havighurst and the general characteristics of adolescence.

Adolescent perceptions about self-agency, and the agency of the other, may contribute to the confusion. Increased peer-networks [75; 76], emotionally invested partnerships and a greater awareness of the self in relation to the world all might play a role to create a perception of disorientation (Bandura, et al., 2003, p. 769).

Adolescence is a time of learning. This often entails modelling one's behaviour on that of credible role models (Bandura, 2002, p. 272; Woolfolk, 2013, p. 700). The perception of the absence of credible role-models may also leave the adolescent with a feeling of being lost and confused ["What is a role model – is there still something



like that?" (D: 15)]. According to the data (D:15), having credible role models seems to be an important need for adolescents.

Feeling confused about life may cause the belief of losing control over the course of one's life. This seems to be consistent with the characteristics of the developmental stage of adolescence as has been discussed in Section 3.2. Whatever strategies one has employed in the past to give meaning, structure and direction to life has now become inadequate or invalid, and life is perceived to be difficult [11; 12; 13; 15; 19]. Some participants [21; 26; 35; 36; 37; 67; 73] expressed feelings of confusion by statements beginning with "I don't know" or "I don't understand". These feelings of disorientation could be exacerbated by the fact that the adolescent is gradually leaving the more sheltered environment of childhood. Growing independence (Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429) also means greater exposure to the challenges of life that could render the adolescent with increased perceptions of vulnerability (Cote and Levine, 2002, p. 4-6; Coleman & Hagell, 2007, pp. 3-7). This increased exposure to life and a sense of vulnerability may in turn create the belief that life is difficult. If this difficulty is perceived to be beyond one's beliefs of self-efficacy, it may be seen as fatalism (also see Chapters 3.2.3 and 3.3 in this regard).

However, the belief that life is difficult does not seem to perpetually fill everyone with an overwhelming sense of dread [18; 19; 25; 30; 31]. Adolescents may fluctuate between beliefs of high and low self-efficacy or between feelings of being in control and not being in control (Donald et al., 2010, pp. 64-65).

Beliefs about an insecure future seem to loom large in the world of adolescents. Because adolescence is a time of establishing social networks and emotionally invested relationships (Bandura et al, 2003, p. 770), any disturbance in the social equilibrium may be traumatic, for example, when close friends, who formed part of an essential peer-support system, suddenly move away [32]. This may cause insecurity. Sudden changes can be perceived as a threat to one's own sense of equilibrium (comfort zone). To the mind of the adolescent, these changes may impact heavily on one's sense of self, comfort and safety (Bandura et al, 2003, pp. 769-770).

The perceived lack of safety and security in South Africa seemed to weigh heavily on the minds of many of the participants, many of whom have already been victims of crime. This is consistent with the literature discussed in Chapter 3.3.3. According to Ncgobo, (1999, pp.151-152) this can leave them with intense feelings of anxiety about the future [111 - 119]. Besides the feelings of anxiety, there were also beliefs signalling a loss of freedom. In addition, thoughts about their own safety were often determined by their fear of violent criminals in society.

Some of the participants seem to have a further impediment on their beliefs about the future. They may have already experienced the personal strife of a sibling to cope with life and attain success. Often, the sibling's trials and tribulations may have come at his/her own hands through high-risk behaviour, for example, chemical substance abuse [152] (Casey et al., 2008, pp. 111, 122; Konrad et al., 2013, p. 425). This may create anxiety about the future based on the belief that the same type of experience may come to them [152]. Making decisions about the future may come with increased anxiety, because they could be directly opposed to the values and behavioural choices of the immediate peer group or even the biological family (Coleman & Hagell, 2007, p. 3). Choices made in such adverse circumstances may be hard to maintain because of peer and/or environmental pressure (Bandura, et al., 2003, pp. 769-780). Compromised academic development, anti-social behaviour, and the lack of empathy with other's emotional experiences, could be associated with fatalistic thinking (Bandura et al., 2003, pp. 769-780).

Beliefs that the future is uncertain may also be ascribed to the developmental task of adolescence of enrolling into higher education and preparing for a career or starting a job for the first time. This seems to be consistent with the argument of Havighurst, (1973, in Swanson et al., 2010, p. 94) discussed in Section 3.2. Especially older adolescents may find themselves in a bottleneck of time constraint [36; 63] as far as preparation for a career is concerned, not knowing whether they would be able to keep up with the demands of a rapidly changing world [33-36] (Casey, et al., 2008, pp. 112, 114, 116, 121).

Contributing to the insecurity about the future is the belief that one has to live up to the expectations of others [35], who may seem to have a clear idea of where one

should be heading in life, while one may still be very uncertain about the direction of one's life. This could exacerbate the feelings of anxiety about the future, leading to the belief that one has no or little control over the direction of one's life (Coleman & Hagell, 2007, p. 3) – see Chapter 3.2.

There were, however, some adolescents who believed that the future is what you are going to make of it. They emphasised their beliefs of agency and self-efficacy in order to attain a positive future [134 - 149]. They seemed to be capable of strong self-regulatory cognitive processes, especially with regard to affective self-regulation (Bandura, 2003, pp. 770-775).

Some of the research participants verbalised their awareness of their own mortality [38; 39]. Adolescence is often the time of life during which they have their first experiences of the death of a loved one. The understanding of death as inevitable and coping with it may depend on their ability to regulate their own cognitive processes in this regard [14]. Their ability to cope with thoughts about death, or even death itself, may rely heavily on their beliefs in their own affective self-regulatory competency (Swanson et al., 2010, p. 94; Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429; Steinberg, 2008, p. 7). Adolescents' inability to regulate their thoughts about their own mortality and the mortality of others may lead to fatalistic thinking; especially should they be overwhelmed by thoughts about death as a struggle against insurmountable odds.

#### **5.4.2 Beliefs about external influences**

Adolescent beliefs about the agency of others tie up with the social cognitive construct of collective agency as postulated by Albert Bandura (See the literature discussed in Sections 2.3 and 3.2). It describes them acting together with others to mould their future. This is also a time in which adolescents learn to apply interpersonal strategies to achieve agency by proxy, especially because they are still dependent on others to affect positive or desired outcomes on their behalf (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). On the other hand individual agency becomes increasingly important because it comes with the belief that one is able to control one's destiny (internal locus of control). Although control may often be surrendered voluntarily to

others, the perception of loss of control involuntarily may result in intense affective and psychosocial responses in the lives of adolescents. Adolescents, with their growing search for independence, seek to have increased self-influence on the events of their lives (Bandura, 2003, pp. 760-770). This may determine their behaviour as they strive towards an internal locus of control. Personal agency is achieved through reflective and regulative thought, the skills at one's command and other choices of influence that affect choice and support selected courses of action (Bandura, 1989, pp. 1178 – 1179). On a different plane, they become aware of the fact that the locus of control often lies outside themselves in external influences. Surrendering control voluntarily to others (proxy and collective agency) normally is a positive experience in pursuit on one's goals in life [87 - 92]. The voluntary surrendering of control was expressed by statements such as "family and friends who are there for me, who help me," and "who support us". When the locus of control is involuntarily taken away, one's lived experiences associated with the surrendering of control may become negative [10]. The external locus of control then affects the outcomes of one's life in a negative way. This may result in a belief of being 'pitilessly blocked' (Acevedo, 2005, p. 80) with no hope of achieving a desired outcome [16; 18]. This is probably the point where beliefs of individual agency or the beliefs of locus of control may contribute to a fatalistic mind-set and consequently result in associated behaviour. These behaviours may include difficulty to cope (De Minzi, 2003, p. 328), and possibly high risk behaviour (Konrad et al., 2013, p. 425)

However, navigating the challenges of adolescence could be compared to walking a tightrope, always trying to maintain balance and equilibrium while forces in life seem to be affecting change all the time. Coping with the tumult of adolescence has much to do with cognitive and affective self-regulation by employing reflective and regulative thoughts and using the skills at one's disposal to deal with the mastery of locus of control, whether internal or external. In this group of participants, gaining an intrinsic locus of control often centred on their beliefs of God and religion. This links strongly with the literature exploring determinism and pre-determinism as discussed in Sections 2.2.1.1 and 2.2.1.2.

When asked about their feelings about life and about whom they think is in control of their lives, beliefs in God's predetermined plan (Audi, 1995, p. 281; O'Connor, 2010; Griffith, 2013, p.21) surfaced [42 - 45]. They seemed to trust the agency of a higher power to control the outcomes of their lives, even though it left them confused, not able to grasp the divine purpose immediately [45]. Some of them reasoned according to a strong world view of religious determinism (Audi, 1995, p. 281; O'Connor, 2010; Griffith, 2013, p.21), i.e. that God is in control of all events, even if these events do not make sense or may have a negative outcome [40 - 54]. Some participants surrendered willingly to the idea of a personal purpose, viewing themselves as part of a well-constructed divine plan. They completely negate the theory of pure chance, luck (Straughan & Seow, 1998) or accidentalism (Tychism) (Bolle, 1987, p. 292; Bobzien, 1998, pp. 175-176) [55]. They were willing to accept necessity (Honderich, 2005, pp. 19-29), the underpinning concept of determinism, as something that rests in the hand of God. Everything happens because God willed it. These beliefs ties up with the notion of necessity discussed in Sections 2.2.1.1 and 2.2.1.2.

Necessity also links to the beliefs that God has created us with predetermined abilities and potential [46, 132; 155; 161]. This may consequently lead to implicit theories of a fixed or entity view of intelligence and personality (Yaeger and Dweck; 2012, pp., 302-314) and may indeed lead the adolescent to think that he or she can do nothing to improve his or her situation, because "I must accept myself as God created me." This particular religious belief may very well become part of a fatalistic mind-set that annuls any attempt made by the self or another agent (such as a teacher) to affect a positive outcome for the individual.

There is the likelihood, in the case of an adolescent who is academically vulnerable, that fixed implicit theories about intelligence, especially when it is seen as part of divine preordination, may provide a 'valid' reason to surrender to his/her fate. In turn, one's perceptions about academic self-efficacy (Bandura, 2003, 773) may be affected by such beliefs. Despite the pitfalls presented by a deterministic belief about one's abilities and potential, a group of participants held firm beliefs of God as an enabling force in their lives [47 - 54]. It appears that their belief in God's control of their lives enabled them to exercise agency in other areas of their lives. It may

even serve as a strong regulatory thought, buffering them against hopelessness, helplessness and mental defeat and providing a positive alternative cognitive process. An increased belief in their ability to cope with their circumstances may bolster beliefs in self-efficacy in other areas of their lives. This type of self-regulatory thought may also be seen to be consistent with the findings of Powe (1997, in: Powe and Finnie, 2003. p. 458) who postulated that there was not a significant relation between levels of spirituality and levels of cancer fatalism in her study. In other words, spirituality does not always lead to fatalistic thinking because of the possible role of religious determinism in one's thought processes. It is often seen as a motivational and enabling force. It appeared that some adolescent's beliefs about God made them fatalistic, while others viewed it as enabling. A few participants particularly mentioned prayer as a strategy to invoke God's help in order to cope [55; 56; 57]. It seems as if prayer provided those the opportunity to internalise specific beliefs of God. These beliefs possibly strengthened their own beliefs of agency and efficacy, enabling them to face whatever challenge was before them. It seems that their beliefs in prayer and God's providence spanned all areas of life – from obtaining that coveted cell phone [55] to finding a good friend [57].

It seemed as if some of the participants linked negative life experiences to an antagonist force in an effort to explain and interpret these negative experiences [58 - 61]. This is represented in beliefs about the devil. In this regard, the confession of the former South African cricket captain, Hansie Cronje, after being found guilty on charges of match-fixing, comes to mind: "The devil made me do it" (Szreter, 2000, 22/06, *The Guardian*) Some participants mentioned beliefs in the devil as a disabling force in one's life [58 - 61]. In the same way as beliefs about God may give way to deterministic thinking, beliefs about the devil may also affect behaviour in a deterministic way. Blaming the devil could become an easy excuse for making suboptimal moral choices (Donald et al., 2010, p. 54). To the minds of some adolescents, the suboptimal choices they are confronted with in society are often attributed to a belief that religious values and integrity are on the wane [62], hence resulting in immoral behaviour that affects those who attempt to behave morally.

Some adolescents held strong beliefs about the deterministic influence of the environment on a person. Beliefs about the effect of socio-economic inequality

(Ncgobo, 1999, pp. 146-147) on a person were dominant, especially pertaining to acquiring an education and academic attainment (Donald et al., 2010, p. 156 – 158; 276) [64 – 67; 76; 150]. Low beliefs in one's ability to be adequately educated may lead to fatalistic thinking. Being denied education may leave one with inadequate coping skills to face challenges in other spheres of life and may lead to fatalism (Powe & Johnson, 1995, p. 1355; Powe & Finnie, 2003, pp. 455-456). Poverty may also render individuals unable to cope with normal stressors associated with poverty (Roberts et al., 2000, pp. 239-240). This supports the discussion of factors such as poverty as a contributing factor to fatalism as indicated in Section 3.2.

Some participants voiced strong deterministic beliefs [66; 67] about the effect of their social context (Bandura, 2007 as cited in Woolfolk, 2013, p. 399; Venter & Rambau, 2011, pp. 345-356 – see Section 2.3.3) on their development. Others believed that society acts as a determinant for one's morality and attitudes towards life [68; 69]. This could be consistent with the notion of the *zeitgeist* being an environmental determinant in adolescence (See the discussion in 2.2 and 2.3). This may happen when vicarious learning (Woolfolk, 2013, p. 400), as mentioned in chapter 3.2.1.1, takes place in terms of behaviour and attitudes (Smetana, Campione-Barr & Metzger, 2006, p. 258). One adolescent stated that the negative attitudes of others had a detrimental effect on one's own beliefs [67; 69], a finding which is consistent with what the literature revealed about the sometimes detrimental effect of peer influence (see Chapter 3.2.3) (Coleman & Hagell, 2007, p. 3). This may suggest a low self-efficacy to regulate the effect of peer influence on a cognitive level (Bandura et al., 2003, pp. 769-780). This could lead to suboptimal decision making and risk-taking (Casey et al., 2008, p. 122), as has been explored in Chapters 3.2.1.2 and 3.2.1.3. Beliefs about the social environment also seemed to be connected to beliefs about the influence of the others who live in relationship with the participants.

#### **5.4.3 Beliefs about the influence of others**

Beliefs about the other are closely linked to beliefs about the environment and often relate directly to adolescents' lived experiences and their perceptions of others. These beliefs support what has been discussed in Chapter 2.2.1.4 regarding the beliefs of an external locus of control as suggested by Karl Marx (Lukes, 1967,



p.138) and others. Most of these beliefs pertain to the perception that one's life is controlled by forces outside of oneself. In this regard, socially determined beliefs seemed to play an important part.

The perception of external control seemed to play a significant part in the lives of adolescents. Their behaviour is often altered according to how they think they are perceived by others, as I have discussed in Chapter 3.2.1.1. Strong responses were evoked from participants representing beliefs about how they are perceived by others [70 - 74], a fact that supports the ideas about the "imaginary audience" often found in adolescents. The determining factors in this instance are either the way in which the adolescent perceives the way in which he/she is seen by the other, or the way in which the behaviour of the other towards him/her determines affective, cognitive and behavioural responses.

There are marked individual differences in cognitive development among adolescents as the literature indicated in Section 3.2.1.1 of the literature review. During this stage of their lives, adolescents are able to engage in introspection and mature decision making that was previously beyond their reach (Steinberg, 2008, p. 11). In validating their own worth and ability, they become more self-conscious and self-reflective. They develop an increasing awareness of how they are seen by others and some may develop an "imaginary audience" – and expression of how they think they are seen by others (Steinberg, 2008, p. 11). A few participants held strong beliefs that they are being judged by others, either on the basis of their character, achievement in life or background.

These judgements by the other may impact negatively on the motivational processes of adolescents, especially as far as it creates feelings low self-esteem and nihilism (See Sections 2.3.4.1 and 3.4.1.3 of the literature review in this regard). In this instance, nihilism and low self-esteem presented itself as socially determined beliefs which may affect their ability to master challenges. In this case, the negative judgement of parents [98; 154] or educators [153] may cause a low belief in academic self-efficacy. (Yeager & Dweck, 2012, pp., 302-314). In this way, beliefs of perceived negative judgements by others may in fact become a self-fulfilling prophesy, leading to low beliefs of self-efficacy and subsequently to weak academic



performance or even dropping out of school. At the core of this phenomenon lies possibly the fatalistic belief about academic inefficacy.

The influence of the behaviour of the immediate peer group on the participating adolescents seemed to be profound and this finding supports the literature discussed in Section 3.2 of the literature review. Some participants held an extremely positive perception of the role of their peer-networks [87 - 90]. Others have been more negative in their evaluation of their peers. The extension of the peer-network during adolescence means that the adolescent has to cope with extended pressure in relationships without the emotional maturity and coping skills to deal with it in a constructive way [78; 79] (Bandura et al., 2003, p. 769). The dynamic environment of the social media has extended these peer networks to a global level, increasing the extent and influence of the peer network immensely [75; 79]. The responses from a number of adolescents suggested the degeneration of trust (Havighurst (1973, in: Swanson et al., 2010, p. 94) in peer relationships [77 - 81]. This seems to have the effect of emotional instability in individuals, as well as beliefs about a breach of interpersonal trust. These individuals may not necessarily have the appropriate skills to deal with it in a constructive and appropriate way. This is part of the adolescent's process of learning about reciprocity and relationship trust (Havighurst, 1973, in: Swanson et al., 2010, p. 94). This inability to cope with the taxing pressures of the peer-network may cause the adolescent to withdraw [82 - 84], surrendering to the belief that the peer-network represents an unsafe environment. This may also cause low self-belief in the area of one's social skills, which may have detrimental effects on beliefs of self-agency, proxy agency and collective agency (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175-1178). The threat of the peer-network may result in beliefs of being controlled by the peer-network which may result in a 'fatalistic type' of withdrawal from the peer-group.

On the other hand, some responses suggested that a withdrawal from the peer group [82 - 84] can be seen as regaining control over a situation that was out of control. This might suggest very high levels of agency and beliefs in self-efficacy. Bandura et al. (2003, pp. 773) described this type of behaviour as resistive self-regulatory efficacy.

Beliefs about the expectations of significant others, seem to create pressure [36; 93], which could be closely related to the desire not to disappoint [45; 109]. Beliefs about disappointing the other often followed suit [95], especially after suboptimal choices were made to take “the easiest way out” [86].

Adolescents’ perceptions of self-efficacy seemed to influence their ability to visualise themselves to be successful (or not) [134 - 136] in future. Self-efficacy affect thought patterns that may be enabling or disabling (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). The ability to view themselves as successful may also be influenced by the fact that their capacity of foresight and strategic thinking are still developing (Bandura, 2002, p. 272; Casey, et al., 2008, pp. 112; 114; 116; 121). Related beliefs are often attained by maintaining positive self-talk [137 – 143]. Beliefs about one’s ability to be successful may be based on the experience of earlier successes [144] or failure [156]. Beliefs about academic self-efficacy (Bandura et al, 2003, p. 773) were often linked to beliefs about personal agency. Some adolescents mentioned that hard work is the key to success (Bandura, 1989, p. 1175). Some participants visualised themselves as successful [139; 140; 142; 147]. These beliefs may impact positively on one’s ability to be resilient and resist mental defeat [150]. The inefficacy to visualise one’s self as successful, may impact negatively on one’s beliefs of agency, especially pertaining to motivation and resilience.

However, many adolescents are very positive about the contribution of the other in their lives, especially where it pertains to family and friends [87 - 92]. These positive beliefs render them with a great sense of agency, efficacy (self, proxy and collective). The other also provides motivation and support, and contributes to a healthy sense of self and well-being. These close support structures may provide the security that could be lacking in the larger peer-network that is sometimes perceived as a threatening environment.

As the literature discussed in Sections 3.3 and 3.4 revealed, adolescents’ beliefs of their relationships with their parents are possibly one of the most influential beliefs about possible support structures (Meyer-Weitz, 2005, pp. 75-77; Bray, et al., 2009, pp. 282-285; Venter and Rambau, 2011, pp. 345-356). In this sample group, many adolescents held very positive beliefs of how their parents influenced their lives and

how they are seen by their parents [88; 91; 92; 93]. These perceptions of their parents span a wide range. There are beliefs that their parents love them. They had also shown gratitude towards them for providing their means. There is also the desire not to disappoint them, although this seemed to cause anxiety [93]. This desire seems to be rooted in a deep love and appreciation for their parents; therefore it causes even more anxiety, because they may hold the belief that any disappointment will disturb the almost perfect relationship between them. This desire not to disappoint may take on the nature of a life-goal [94]. In cases where this life goal of not disappointing one's parents has for some reason not been attained, it may have adverse consequences for the affective processes of the adolescent [95]. Perceived inefficacy to fulfil desired goals that affect the evaluation of one's self-worth and to secure things that bring satisfaction to life can give rise to bouts of depression (Bandura, 1989, p.1178).

In the adolescent-parent relationship, the parents are sometimes also the source of intense disappointment [97 – 99]. This can often be linked to a lack of parental support that may vary according to individual needs and circumstances. There may be the belief that parental support is inadequate in one way or the other. This becomes especially problematic when the lack of support pertains to the adolescent believing that, because of the lack of parental support, he/she cannot attain their own goals in life, such as finishing school or tertiary education [98; 99]. This may create fatalistic beliefs of one's ability to control the outcome of one's life.

Adolescents are often at loggerheads with their parents. This may be ascribed to the challenge of establishing their identities and gain independence (Swanson et al., 2010, p. 94; Konrad et al., 2013, p. 429). They may typically try to separate themselves from the constraints of their families [100 - 102]. In order to achieve this, association with the peer-group becomes increasingly important (Coleman & Hagell, 2007, p. 3). This may lead to them and their parents having different goals. It may also cause the adolescent to engage in risk-taking behaviour [100; 101].

Beliefs about the unfairness of life or the unfairness of others emerged as a very strong theme in this research. In this theme the beliefs in an external locus of control were at its most profound. It predominantly centred on the beliefs of loss of personal

agency on the one hand, and on the other hand, beliefs in the unfairness of life as a collective external force. These beliefs seemed to reflect the notions of determinism and external locus of control as discussed in Section 2.2 of the literature review.. Life and others were often seen as “unfair agents” that put the self at risk, and to whom they have surrendered control without the hope to affect a positive outcome themselves [12; 13; 24; 108, 127]. Beliefs about the self as a victim to the unfairness of life and/or others fit into various definitions of fatalism (Whelan; 1996, as cited in Bernardet al., 2011, p. 1). In confluence with the ideas of early Greek philosophy (see Chapter 2.2.1), the beliefs in the agency of others are collectively linked to create a belief about the agency of life as an external locus of control (Bolle, 1987, p. 292; Bobzien, 1998, pp. 175-176). The adolescents’ perceptions of life being unfair often seem to revolve around inequality in terms of opportunities [122 - 128]. Troublesome life experiences are often ascribed to life, as the collective denominator for the agency of different individuals, causing the hardship. Although life is believed to be unfair [12; 13], God is believed to be fair and just. His intention is that life should have a positive outcome [5; 6; 31; 45]. In this respect, life and/or the other may be seen as in opposition to God.

Beliefs about life’s unfairness have been connected to the deterministic belief that, no matter how hard you try, you will never get the just reward [156; 157] (see Sections 2.2.1.1 and 2.2.1.2 in this regard). These beliefs in personal inefficacy may lead to fatalistic thoughts (of being unable to affect a positive outcome) and even depression. The locus of control in this instance belongs to life. The self is seen as merely an object of life’s agency, which may lead to fatalistic thinking.

Beliefs of the other as a threat, causing hurt [8; 59; 104; 106; 110] and confusion [6 - 15] have featured prominently among the participants. These beliefs go hand in hand with beliefs of life that is unfair. Such beliefs appeared to be varied. They also resonated with negative beliefs of the role of the other in one’s life. These beliefs were quite generalised among the sample group and pertains to others as the agents of hurt. Beliefs about the threat of others could create circumstances in which the adolescents see themselves as the victims of hurt. Beliefs that were particularly relevant to the sample in this study were beliefs in own inefficacy to positively affect circumstances or events; beliefs about the loss of personal agency

(locus of control); and beliefs about one's destiny being threatened by the other. The perception that personal agency is lost may lead to fatalism.

According to the data collected from this sample group, beliefs of personal safety and security being under threat in South Africa (Donald et al., 2010. P. 227), featured prominently [111 - 119]. These sentiments may have been associated with beliefs of the other as a violent threat, which has become a strong discourse in South African society. A telling example of this discourse was the "Red October" public protest that was launched against the killing of white people which is perceived by some as 'white genocide' (Lauren Hess, News24, *The Huh? For Red October*, 2013-10-10, 14:05). In other communities fierce battles are being fought against gang related violence which creates beliefs about the other as a threat. (SAPA, Cape Schools close amid gang violence, 2013-08-14, 20:40, <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Cape-schools-close-amidst-gang-violence-20130814>).

Violent crimes in South Africa seem to be causing nihilism in some sectors of society. Ncgobo, (1999, pp.151-152) mentioned the role of violence, especially armed violence, and how it pertains to a nihilistic *zeitgeist* in less affluent black communities (see Section 2.3.4.1 of the literature review). Many disillusioned young people have access to firearms and use them to terrorise their own communities with violence to achieve their means and gain an illusion of empowerment. Nihilistic discourses about violence in South African society could easily have become the models upon which adolescents shape their perceptions of the other as a threat [119]. Extensive media coverage has also elevated the threat of violence to an everyday occurrence. Such discourses may foster fatalistic thoughts about the loss of personal agency and life being out of control (Dupree, 2010, p. 76). Trying to cope with the persistent threat of violence as a continuous stressor, may have a detrimental effect on the emotional (Dupree, 2010, p. 76) and physical health of adolescents. Stress has been implicated as an important contributing factor to many physical dysfunctions (Bandura, 1989, p. 1989). Inefficacy to control the stressors seemed to be the problem here. Being exposed to stressors that seems uncontrollable may impair the immune system. It affects the biochemical systems associated with coping which, in turn, involves inefficacy and involves the regulation of the immune system. Perceived inefficacy in exercising control over cognitive

stressors activates the endogenous opioid systems, which suppresses the immune system and increases vulnerability (Bandura, Cioffi, Taylor & Broulliard, 1988, in Bandura, 1989, p. 1178). The perpetual threat of violent attacks may cause fatalistic beliefs to take shape with consequent changes in behaviour and health status.

Adolescents' beliefs of the effect of economic injustice on the self were prominent in this sample. There is a current discourse in society that prominent people and politicians with resources are treated differently to ordinary citizens [120, 121]. These beliefs pertain in particular to the penal system where high profile politicians and celebrities clashed with the judicial process of the country. This discourse has seemingly not escaped the attention of adolescents. One participant held the belief that nepotism and corruption are prevalent in society and that they are deprived of opportunities because of this [122].

There seemed to be a stereotypical belief among some adolescents that peers from a wealthy background was treated differently. This sentiment probably invokes feelings of inferiority, causing a stereotypical backlash on what is perceived as unfair inequality [123].

Adolescents are painfully aware of the political history of the country and the racial discrimination and injustice associated with it. Affirmative action was introduced into the South African labour system to redress the wrongs of the past. Strangely enough, strong current beliefs of racial injustice have been raised by adolescents from different cultural groups [124 - 128]. These beliefs once again centred on beliefs of unjust treatment by the other and the perceived loss of personal agency which affected their beliefs about creating a positive future. Various prevalent discourses about discrimination in different communities are often met with the same type of mental defeat and beliefs about the loss of personal agency. In this response, negative emotions and disengagement from the activity in question was specifically mentioned [127] which could also be regarded as a fatalistic response, not believing in one's own agency to affect a positive outcome and perceiving control to be in the hands of others. Sometimes the frustration with what is perceived to be an injustice system boils over and evoked an aggressive backlash [127], often against people or things that are being held to high esteem by people of other

groups who are perceived to gain advantage from the system [127] (see, for example Section 2.3.4.1, especially the discussion on the case of the Waterkloof 4). This may be, albeit misconstrued, an attempt to alleviate a feeling of loss of control (Williamson, 2004, as cited in Coleman and Hagell, 2007, pp. 33-34) or address a power imbalance (Donald et al., 2010, p. 224). Lazarus et al. (2009) and Lees (2008) as cited in Donald et al (2010, p. 224), postulated that this type of violence might occur when children have internalized oppression into their images and feelings about themselves, either as victims or perpetrators of oppression. One can link this mind-set with nihilism and fatalistic thinking in adolescents, resulting in high-risk behaviour (Donald et al., 2010, p. 224; Kalichman, et. al., 1997, p. 542). These feelings of anger against a perceived unjust system are not confined to only one group. Often particular affective states may lead to specific behavioural responses. Sentiments of disengagement and alienation (Lukes, 1967, p. 137) from the academic system were expressed [128] which may be considered as a fatalistic response.

Some adolescents perceived the language criteria of job advertisements as discriminatory because very few people from their cultural group are able to speak a language such as Afrikaans, which is the language of the majority of people in certain areas of the Western Cape [124]. The belief that they are unfairly discriminated against may in turn have created the perception that their choices were limited by external forces. The resulting perception that self-agency is lost to and external locus of control may cause fatalistic thinking.

Another group of adolescents represent a cultural group about which the perception exists that they occupy the political middle ground. Within that group, the discourse exists that, in the new South Africa, they are trapped in the middle between the ruling black majority regime and the white minority [125; 126]. The belief exists in their community that they will never have sufficient agency and control to affect a better future. Some participants have assessed the policy of affirmative action as a racially unjust system. This discourse has been met by mental defeat and a nihilistic belief that they have been alienated from the South African society [126]. This nihilistic type of belief that stems from the discourses in this community could serve as a likely philosophical underpinning to fatalism in the individual (Powe & Johnson, 1995



as cited in Powe and Finnie, 2003, p. 455). Nihilistic alienation and withdrawal from a process that the participants have eagerly taken part in before, could occur, which supports the discussion about the relation between alienation, fatalism and nihilism indicated in Sections 2.2.2 and 2.3.4.1 in the literature review.

Consistent with what was discussed in Section 3.2.1.1 of the literature review, one of the learners reckoned that the negative discourses about race in his community were kept alive by his/her parents' continuation of the discourses prominent during apartheid [129]. These discourses have the effect of negative socialisation (Bray, et al., 2010, p. 63) in some adolescents which result in racist judgements of other selves. Negative socialisation of adolescents by their parents seems to be continuing the spiral of racism across generation lines. Bandura (2002, pp. 272-273) and Bray, et al. (2010, pp. 289-308) emphasised the role of modelling in the learning of values and behaviour.

Some participants held definite beliefs about gender inequality in the South African Community. One participant reckoned that gender stereotyping still takes away people's opportunities in the work place [130]. This corresponds with what was discussed in Section 3.3.4 about perceptions of gender roles, etc. In some communities, teenage pregnancies have taken on alarming proportions. One learner felt that the girls always get the short end of the straw, because the perception is that teenage fathers can continue with their lives without taking any responsibility [131]. This seems to be supported by the literature discusses in Chapter 3.4.1.3.

## **5.5 REFLECTION ON THE FINDINGS**

In reflecting on the meanings that the participant's made of their experiences it seems apparent to me that that there was a strong link between the immediate lived experiences or contexts of the learners and their cognitive construction of meaning. Related to this, it seems that their cognitive processes of meaning making were severely influenced by current discourses in their environment and direct experiences. These influences could be related to specific beliefs which might have rendered them more vulnerable and prone to fatalistic thinking in particular circumstances. It also seemed that possible fatalism was almost without exception a



response to specific circumstantial or environmental influences after it had been shaped by the adolescents' emergent world views. This seems to be consistent with the structure of cognitive theory as postulated by Beck, relating specific experiences or events with the construction of automatic thoughts that, in turn, cause an emotional, behavioural or psychological reaction.

In light of the findings it seems as if meanings of helplessness, hopelessness and fatalism are made by adolescents in specific contexts. However, juxtaposed against this, were also the making of meanings of resilience and hope, regardless of their often adverse lived experiences. The latter may point towards the possession of adequate coping and self-regulating strategies that have been often, in the case of the sample that has been studied, linked to religious beliefs.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

From the analysis of the data, it appears that the learners who participated in this study have experienced various contextual factors that contributed to their meaning making.

Furthermore, these contextual factors have been linked by the participants, and dominantly in the literature, to some meanings that can be summarised as fatalism, answering the research questions of this study. Alongside these meanings, the learners gave rich or detailed descriptions of actions, reflections and motivations that suggest possible additional, alternative or preferred meanings pertaining to fatalistic thinking that their contexts seem to invoke, and that dominant discourses in the literature appear to portray.

At this stage it would be important to note that the belief in good luck, which figured strongly in other research (Powe, 1995) as discussed extensively in Chapter 2, did not manifest at all as a dimension of fatalism in South African adolescents. Concepts of determinism in other religions such as traditional African religions, as discussed in Chapter 2.2.1.5, have not come to the fore. Only the Christian notion of predeterminism or determinism, as discussed in Chapter 2.2.1.2, has been prominent. References to Islamic doctrine on determinism did not manifest at all,

probably because of the low number of research participants who follow Islam as a religion. The idea brought forward by Stroessner and Green about the (see Section 2.2.1.4) about the co-existence of beliefs in free will and external locus of control seemed not to be a relevant discourse in the minds of the research participants, because the data revealed that very few of the participants believed in the notions of luck or randomness. They view the world strongly in terms of external loci of control. Most of the other voices made heard in the literary review have somehow resonated in the data.

Chapter six presents a conclusion to the research findings and recommendations that arose from the research process. It also includes a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the study, suggestions for future research and concluding reflections.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSIONS TO FINDINGS; RECOMMENDATIONS; LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will provide a summary of this research and reflect on the possible limitations and strengths of this study. Concluding remarks will be presented upon which recommendations for further research will be made.

#### **6.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH STUDY**

A qualitative exploratory study, framed within an interpretivist paradigm, and a theoretical framework of social cognitive theory, was used to answer the research questions as a means of achieving the aims of the study. This was achieved through a series of creative strategy sessions, as well as focus group and individual interviews held with grade 11 learners from five schools in the Western Cape. These learners were a diverse group consisting of various language and cultural groups from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. As discussed in chapter one, this study aimed to investigate the possibility and nature of fatalistic thinking as it manifests in the lived experiences of adolescents, and the possible influence such a mind-set will have on their educational attainment.

This study was informed by a literature review discussed in chapters two and three which addressed the different theoretical perspectives pertaining to the etiology of fatalism. The literature was approached from a very wide perspective, including contributions from the various disciplines in the field of social sciences including theology, philosophy, psychology and social theory. These insights were complemented by perspectives from educational psychology particularly with regard to adolescent development and learning theory.

The focus of chapter four was on the research paradigm, the research design and the research methodology. The research methods and instrument, the interview schedule, were discussed. Chapter 5 presented the results of the study.

### **6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY**

The study's limitations need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. Limitations with regard to the method and sample, the relationship between the researcher and the participants, as well as the language of communication could have an impact on the generalisation of findings.

#### **6.3.1 Method**

In Section 4.2.5 I mentioned that the interpretive method is dependent on the stories people tell and how they reproduce their experiences in language. Therefore interpretive methods of research will always be subjective, because it depends on meaning making through language. The language of the research in itself is context-bound and dependent on my own, as well as the participants' values and social locations. As the main research instrument I had to rely on my own skills to receive information in natural contexts and uncover its meaning during the process of exploration.

#### **6.3.2 Sample**

As mentioned in Sections 4.5.2, this study was performed on a purposeful and convenience sample obtained by selection by the researcher and voluntary participation by the recipients in five schools in the Western Cape. The fact that all the participants were grade 11 learners also excluded younger and older adolescents, as well as adolescents who do not attend school.

#### **6.3.3 Age and background of the researcher**

Although the response of adolescents to the researcher was positive, open and constructive throughout the sample, I am aware of the possible influence on the difference in age, cultural background, language, academic training between me and

the participants, as well as the learners' possible perception of a power differential, on the research findings. It is possible that some of the participants were not comfortable with me as the researcher, but did not openly declare their discomfort. This might have led to them 'holding back' in some of their responses, therefore the data that was collected is probably suboptimal.

#### **6.3.4 Language of communication**

Although no difficulties occurred in four of the five schools regarding the language used to obtain the data, school E was different. Although the language of teaching and learning is English, all the learners come from a background in which isiXhosa is their home language. As it seemed some of the learners had a very low English proficiency and could not participate optimally in the process of data collections. This might have weakened the overall data yield somewhat and resulted in their voices not being optimally heard in the research.

### **6.4 CONCLUSION**

#### **6.4.1 The research questions**

This study has explored and given further impetus to the tentative assumption that was made prior to this inquiry: fatalism among adolescents may be at the root of a variety of recognisable behavioural and educational problems that manifest in South African society. I believe that the research questions have been adequately answered. A discussion of the research questions follows here.

##### ***6.4.1.1 What are the possible manifestations of fatalism in adolescents?***

Adolescent fatalism in the South African context seems to emanate from the lived experiences of adolescents. It manifests as a cognitive phenomenon, rooted in the beliefs of adolescents, with behavioural, affective and psychological consequences. Adolescent fatalism seems to stem from cognitive processes that lead the individual to interpret specific beliefs and lived experiences to be either enabling or disabling. Disabling beliefs may be connected to the individual's perception of the loss of

personal agency (internal locus of control) to external agents (external locus of control). In adolescents those perceptions seem to be centring on various deterministic beliefs about the influence of a higher power, the environment and others on their lives. Contrary to the findings of the subject literature that was reviewed, this study did not find adolescents to hold the role of luck in life's outcomes as an important belief. It was completely understated in the sample. Adolescents sometimes seem to experience a loss of personal agency due to their cognitive interpretation of the confluence of their lived experiences, beliefs and behaviour. Loss of personal agency often seems to lead to mental defeat, which may leave them with the belief that they cannot affect their personal circumstances to attain a positive outcome (fatalism). Fatalism seems to cause specific behavioural, affective and psychological responses. Specific factors in the social environment seem to affect fatalism in adolescents. In order to adequately describe the phenomenon it is important to always refer to a specific factor in the description of fatalism. The manifestations of fatalism in adolescents may be described as follows:

It seems that adolescent fatalism settles first and foremost in the individual beliefs of adolescents. These beliefs operate internally in a causal way to affect specific emotional, psychological and behavioural responses in the individual. Personal fatalistic beliefs normally operate in a wide range of application. They may range from the belief that everything has an appointed outcome which cannot be altered by effort or foreknowledge, to a sense of resignation (mental defeat) based on the realities of a difficult life-situation, to a more imprecise set of connotations covering cynicism towards established values of work and order. If they fall in the range of the description above, they may be termed fatalistic beliefs or fatalism. Internally these beliefs are in a reciprocal relation with the physiological, cognitive and affective states and the natural maturation of the individual. Fatalism in the individual may possibly influence the external reciprocal relationship between the adolescent and the environment, which include the other, as well as social and physical conditions such as the current *zeitgeist* in society as well as the *Zits im Leben*. Four dimensions of adolescent fatalism emerged from the study: beliefs about the self; beliefs about the influence of others; beliefs grounded in the physical and social environment of adolescents; cognitive processes influenced by personal psycho-neural and hormonal factors.

- Fatalism stemming from beliefs about the self: This description fits the perception of the loss of agency because of low beliefs of efficacy or beliefs of inefficacy pertaining to affecting a positive or desired outcome in a given situation. Lived experiences, associated with negative beliefs about the self, seem to be closely linked to negative feedback from others (such as peers, parents and educators). Perceptions of the self, created according to negative feedback, seem to give rise to specific beliefs of self-agency and self-efficacy. Beliefs of low self-efficacy or inefficacy may be linked to fixed implicit beliefs about one's own potential. Beliefs based on fixed implicit theories seem to sometimes be associated with beliefs of religious determinism.
- Fatalism emerging from beliefs about the influence of others: When the perception of a significant power differential between the self and others exists in the mind of adolescents, and the influence of others appears to hinder self-actualisation and self-fulfilment, fatalism may manifest. The following perceptions associated with particular lived experiences seem to affect fatalism in adolescents: Beliefs about the influence of peers and parents on the self; beliefs about the other as a violent threat to the self; beliefs about the effect of economic injustice on the self; beliefs about the effect about racial injustice on the self and beliefs about the effect about gender inequality on the self. These beliefs are caused by a wide variety of lived experiences such as the following: perceived unfair judgement by the peer group; the perception that one's social image is damaged by the behaviour of others in the social media; the deterioration of the relationship between adolescent and his/her parents; their perceptions of parental and environmental pressure; lack of parental support; failure to be successful in one's goals; feeling unsafe because of violence in society; and the experience of social and political injustice.
- Fatalism grounded in the physical and social environments in which adolescents grow up: In this instance, adolescents perceived self-agency to be stripped away by their physical and/or social environments. Adolescent fatalism often seems to be the consequence of calamitous physical and social

environments. One of the most common causes appears to be a lack of resources and the basic means and conditions of living. Various socio-economic problems are associated with poverty, such as alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence, parental negligence, domestic discord and violence, limited access to education and training and the lack of positive social role models. Some of the research participants held strong deterministic beliefs about the effect of the social environment in which they grow up. These beliefs could contribute to fatalism.

- Fatalism, as influenced by the psycho-neural and hormonal processes of adolescents: Adolescence is a time of dramatic psycho-neural and hormonal changes. Therefore one may expect the adolescent to sometimes struggle to cope with the psychological effects of their rapidly changing biological landscapes. These changes may very well be confluent with other causal factors of fatalism such as the social environment or personal circumstances. Being a part of the unique personal reality of the adolescent, psycho-neural processes are important collaborators with the environmental and behavioural factors in creating the lived experiences of adolescence.

#### **6.4.1.2 How does fatalism possibly colour their lived experiences?**

Fatalism pertaining to one or a variety of lived experiences may influence the world view of adolescents. Beliefs about life are very closely related to adolescents' world views. Such beliefs may cause them to view the world in a very negative light. They may tend to generalise their negative affective states to other experiences, causing them to become generally pessimistic. Pessimism may have detrimental effects on motivation and the belief in self-efficacy, and, in the long run, may contribute to the onset of depression. A typical statement of a generally pessimistic assessment of life in general would be: *"Everything is too much and nothing is making sense"* (A45).

Fatalistic beliefs may cause adolescents to question the values of life. An enduring sense of nihilism and the belief that life is meaningless seems to lead to serious psychological affective mood disorders such as anxiety and depression. It may even result in thoughts of suicide. Fatalistic thoughts about one's orientation in life (The



question: Where am I going?) looks likely to include beliefs that life is mostly out of control, confusing and difficult links up with the general beliefs that constitute a negative world view. Depending on the individual nature of the beliefs, it may impede on goal progression, motivation and learning. Beliefs that life is out of control may also influence one's beliefs about the future, agency, self-efficacy and attainment in life. The belief of self-efficacy, of being able to affect the paths of one's life through selection processes, has a significant influence on adolescents' views of the future. The more self-efficacy they judge themselves to have, the wider the range of career and other future options they would consider appropriate for themselves. Self-inefficacy, caused by fatalistic beliefs about one's orientation in life, may induce self-limitation of career development. Fatalism colour the lived experiences of adolescent by causing alienation and disengagement from their lived experiences. It sometimes causes oppositional behaviour in adolescents in an effort to regain a sense of control. Fatalism seems to influence the affect and associated behaviours of adolescents in the following ways: alienation and disengagement; oppositional behaviour; the creation of feelings of pessimism, anxiety and depression

- Alienation and disengagement: When adolescents perceive low personal agency or self-efficacy in a specific environment, they seem to feel alienated from something they may have been closely connected in the past. Alienation seems to lead to affective changes which, in turn, may lead to changes in behaviour and cause them to disengage from the environment physically, or to disengage by means of passive coping strategies such as avoidance behaviour. For example, the inability to cope with the taxing pressures of the peer-network may cause the adolescent to withdraw, surrendering to the belief that the peer-network has become an unsafe environment. This may also cause low self-belief regarding their social skills, possibly leading to social isolation and negative affective states.
- Oppositional behaviour: When adolescents perceive their self-agency to be taken away by others, they sometimes seem to give up on the possibility of affecting a positive outcome in a specific situation. Fatalistic thinking may lead them to employ negative behavioural

strategies in a misconstrued effort to regain a sense of control. Examples of this type of behaviour may range from disobedience to their parents to varied expressions of high-risk behaviour. In this study, some of the responses given by participants to others whom they perceived as a threat were violent, albeit only verbal. This may be an effort to regain a perceived loss of control regarding to specific situations.

- The creation of feelings of pessimism, anxiety and depression: Inefficacy to fulfil desired goals, which affects the evaluation of one's self-worth, often has a strong influence on the affect and may at times lead to bouts of depression. Disturbance of the balance in mood or affect may colour the world view of the adolescent, by which other lived experiences are assessed in a negative light. This may lead to the belief that life has no meaning. Fatalism pertaining to specific situations sometimes seems to be generalised to other situations in life, giving rise to more extensive feelings of fatalism and depression. Fatalism appears to be connected to the symptoms of mood disturbance, as well as the symptoms of clinical depression. For this reason fatalism may have a potentially serious impact on the well-being of adolescents.

#### ***6.4.1.3 How does adolescent fatalism possibly affect educational attainment in adolescents?***

Fatalism seem to have an influence on what adolescents believe in terms of educational attainment. It specifically seems to influence the way in which they formulate self-influences such as goals, self-efficacy, outcome expectations and self-regulatory processes. Fatalism could cause and/or be the result of specific behaviours and phenomena related to educational attainment in the following ways:

- Fatalism caused by fixed implicit theories of academic potential: Fixed implicit theories about own academic potential seems to sometimes be a root cause in academic fatalism and low academic attainment. When faced with

academic difficulties, some adolescents seem to capitulate to mental defeat, believing that the mastering of certain subjects or units of work is completely beyond their ability. Even though they remain in the school programme and are still attending classes, they disengage from the process of teaching and learning by displaying apathy and disinterest. These types of academic disengagement affect the realisation of their potential and academic attainment.

- Fatalism as a cause of low levels of motivation: Beliefs of God or a higher power as an “other” functions prominently in the minds of some adolescents, especially pertaining to beliefs that God is in control of one’s destiny. One particular belief stood out as a belief that may potentially cause fatalistic beliefs about one’s own ability and potential: The belief that God has created us with predetermined abilities and potential (predeterminism). However, implicit theories about one’s potential may also have non-religious roots and may be connected to the adolescent’s self-image and self-esteem. This may sometimes lead to fixed implicit theories of low academic self-efficacy. The effect of beliefs of low self-efficacy on personal motivation for academic attainment has already been stated. Fixed theories about low academic self-efficacy or inefficacy sometimes seem to be caused by feedback from others, such as parents, educators, the peer group and wider society. Beliefs of low self-efficacy in adolescents are often caused by negative feedback from others. This seems particularly conducive to fatalism when negative feedback about self-efficacy is given by a more competent other such as parents or educators. This often leads to utter dejection and hopelessness in adolescents, often resulting in total mental defeat and disengagement from life. Negative feedback by superiors, especially pertaining to academic effort, could have a destructive effect on the adolescent’s belief of self-efficacy and attainment, resulting in negative cognitive strategies and behaviour in order to cope. Fatalism may cause learners to either withdraw from the process of learning and teaching by making very little or no effort at all to master the work, even while attending classes. In addition to this internal withdrawal in an effort to cope with social and emotional discomfort, learners may physically disengage from the formal processes of education and learning by dropping

out of school. This would have significant effects on their personal and academic attainment and may result in suboptimal behaviour in terms of achievement outcomes, such as low motivation, weak goal progression and suboptimal learning.

- Fatalism as a contributing force in the phenomenon of adolescents leaving the educational system due to disciplinary procedures: Oppositional behaviour associated with fatalism seems to sometimes be causing deviant behaviours that may well lead to disengagement from academic interactions and processes. Such disengagement is reflected in a spectrum of rebellious or deviant behaviours, potentially including expulsion from the school system and/or infractions of the law and acquaintance with the judicial system, with obvious effects on personal and academic attainment.
- Fatalism as a social influence on learning: The social influences at stake are the way in which adolescents model their behaviour and world view on social models, as well as the way in which they react to models in the process of education, such as peers and educators. Fatalistic beliefs may also influence the way in which the adolescent responds to and benefits from educational instruction. The following example may explain the process of triadic reciprocal causality: If, for example an adolescent holds a belief of self-inefficacy to master and understand Mathematics (self-influence), it may result in a negative experience of the mathematics class and educator (social influence). This may result in suboptimal behaviour (achievement outcomes) such as low motivation, weak goal progression and suboptimal learning. As a consequence he/she may develop behavioural problems such as avoiding the Mathematics class as a strategy of passive coping. A sequence of attitudes and behaviours stemming from a fatalistic belief may indeed affect educational attainment.

Diverse factors concur in the effect of fatalism on educational attainment. It generally seems to centre on beliefs of self-efficacy, beliefs of locus of control, the ability to exercise cognitive self-regulation, motivation, and the efficacy to anticipate

positive future outcomes. Beliefs of determinism and/or predeterminism about one's own intellectual ability also play a role.

Eventually one could say that the underpinnings of fatalism in adolescents are beliefs of life, beliefs of the agency of others and beliefs in self-agency. These beliefs are rooted in their understanding of agency, especially pertaining to one's understanding of internal locus of control (free will) or external locus of control (determinism in all its nuances).

## **6.6 STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY**

To my mind the strength of this study lies firstly in the quality of and truthful responses of the research participants, who, despite of the gaps in age, social background and levels of education, opened up and gave a trustworthy account of their lived experiences. Secondly, the findings of the study support the findings of research studies in other disciplines pertaining to the philosophical underpinnings, beliefs and personal and environmental influences that constitute fatalism.

## **6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study suggested that the problem of fatalism may occur in confluence with specific lived experiences, as well as with the cognitive, emotional and physical development of adolescents. Although the application of the necessary intervention methods fall beyond the focus of this research study, it remains important to discuss the need for creating a supporting environment in schools in which vulnerable learners can be assisted. I strongly recommend more emphasis to be placed on the facilitation of life skills in South African schools. The employment of purposefully and adequately trained Life Orientation educators in South African schools may serve as an important intervention strategy to minimise the risk posed by, and the adverse effects of adolescent fatalism.

The goal of any educational intervention should be focused on developing resilience within the adolescent. Resilience is the process of using protective factors in order to withstand or bounce back from developmental risks or other difficulties.

Resilience is determined by the balance between the stress and developmental risks (challenges) to which the children are exposed and the protective factors that may work for them to counteract the risk. Some of these protective factors are situated within the child such as intellectual capacities, effective communication skills; positive self-concept, feelings of self-worth, confidence, and a generally positive and outgoing approach to life; a sense of autonomy, identity and purpose – including a clear sense of positive values and beliefs; a strong internal locus of control (Donald et al. (2010, pp. 160-161). These internal protective factors should be nurtured and developed inside the Life Orientation classroom. The Life Orientation classroom may become an important external protective factor, as it provides the environment in which essential life skills can be taught and learnt in a holistic manner. In terms of adolescent fatalism, it becomes clear that physical, social and emotional health is paramount in developing a sound barrier of resilience. In terms of teaching life-skills appropriate to combating adolescent fatalism, it is important to understand the dynamics at work. The adolescent prone to a fatalistic mind-set will might tend not to actively pursue solutions to challenging problems as control is positioned externally. Unknown to the adolescent however, is the knowledge and possible solutions that can be attained from within the Life Orientation curriculum. It is the task of the Life Orientation teacher to facilitate this process of learning and open up new horizons and perspectives on what is perceived as insurmountable challenges. The Life Orientation educator should adopt the mind-set and belief that learners have the ability to change their beliefs, and that they might have an important role to play in the process.

## **6.8 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Due to my interest in adolescent fatalism and the large gap in subject literature within the South African context, I would like to continue research by completing a D.Ed. research study in the same field. I would like to propose the following option for further research: Because fatalism seems to be strongly connected with specific lived experiences of adolescents, future research could investigate specific manifestations of fatalism in adolescents for the purpose of designing a questionnaire which could assist in identifying the presence of fatalistic thought patterns in adolescents pertaining to specific contexts or lived experiences. I would

propose to conduct such an inquiry in two phases; by first qualitatively exploring specific thought patterns within the context of the lived experience of adolescents, which I have attained in this study. Now that I have described the phenomenon of adolescent fatalism, a quantitative study will be undertaken. In this quantitative study I intend to develop a questionnaire that will allow for the investigation of fatalistic thought patterns pertaining to specific lived experiences. This questionnaire will then be tested in a sample. This might be achieved by employing a “*QUAL-Quan*” mixed methods research design.

Counsellors and psychologists, as well other role-players within the educational context, should then be able to use the questionnaire as a tool to establish the presence of a fatalistic mind-set in adolescents pertaining to specific lived experiences. Such intervention may enable helpers to prevent fatalistic thought patterns from becoming fixed patterns that may have a negative influence on the individual’s self-agency and self-efficacy. Timeous intervention may strengthen the potential for resilient responses and behaviour in adolescents.

## REFERENCES

- Acevedo, G.A. (2005). Turning Anomie on its Head: Fatalism as Durkheim's Concealed and Multidimensional Alienation Theory. *Sociological Theory*. 23(1), 75.
- Andary, A. (2006). Doing More Than is Practicable - How can we assist children and young people in care to reach their full potential? *Keynote address to the Leaving Care Conference*. Retrieved from [gcyp@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:gcyp@saugov.sa.gov.au).
- Antonovsky, A. (1993). The structure and properties of the sense of coherence scale. *Social Science and Medicine*, 36, (March 1993), 725-733.
- Ar'y, D., Jacobs, L.C. & Razaveh, A. (1985). *Introduction to Research in Education*. 3rd Edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart's and Winston.
- Atmanspacher, H, & Bishop, R. (Eds.) (2007). *Between Chance and Choice*. Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Determinism. Thorverton: Imprint Academic.
- Audi, R. (1995). *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2001). *The Practice of Social Research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Baldwin, J. M. (ed.) (1911). *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Bandura, A. (1989). Human Agency in Social Cognitive Theory. *American Psychologist*. 44(9), 1175-1184.
- Bandura, A. (2002). *Social Cognitive Theory in Cultural Context*. 51(2), 269-290. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.



- Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In R. J. Corsini (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (2nd ed., Vol. 3, pp. 368-369). New York: Wiley.
- Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In V. S. Ramachaudran (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (Vol. 4, pp. 71-81). New York: Academic Press. (Reprinted in H. Friedman [Ed.], *Encyclopedia of mental health*. San Diego: Academic Press, 1998).
- Bandura, A., Caprara, G. V., Barbaranelli, C., Gerbino, M. & Pastorelli, (2003). *Role of Affective Self-regulatory Efficacy in Diverse Spheres of Psychosocial Functioning*. 74(3), 769-782., pp. (769-782)
- Barnes, K., Brynard, S & De Wet, C. (2012). The Influence of School Culture and School Climate on Violence in Schools in the Eastern Cape Province. *South African Journal of Education*, (32), 69-82. EASA.
- Beck, J. S. (2011). *Cognitive Therapy. Basics and Beyond*. London: The Guilford Press.
- Bernard, T., Dercon, S. & Taffesse, A.S. (2011). Beyond Fatalism. An Empirical Exploration of Self-efficacy and Aspirations Failure in Ethiopia. *Centre for the Study of Africa Economies*. Department of Economics. University of Oxford. CSAE WPS/2011-03.
- Bianchi, G., Fichnova, K., Hamranova, A., Lasticova, B. & Sramova, B. (2008). Analyses of socio-cognitive identity styles by Slovak Adolescents *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*., 2(4),196.
- Biddlecom, A. E., Gregory, R., Lloyd, C. B. & Mensch, B. S. (2008). "Associations Between Premarital Sex and Leaving School in Four Sub-Saharan African Countries." *Studies in Family Planning*, 39(4), 337-350.
- Bishop, R.C. (2005). *Determinism and Indeterminism*. Retrieved from <http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/2324/1/Article.pdf>.

- Bjork, J.M., Knutson, B., Fong, G.W., Caggiano, D.M., Bennett, S.M., & Hommer, D.W. (2004). Incentive-Elicited Brain Activation in Adolescents: Similarities and Differences from Young Adults. *The Journal of Neuroscience* 24(8), 1793–1802.
- Blakemore, S.J. & Choudhury, S. (2006). Development of the Adolescent Brain: Implications for Executive Function and Social Cognition. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 47 (3/4), 296–312.
- Blendon, R., Aiken, L., Freeman, H. & Corey, C. (1992). Access to Medical Care for Black and White Americans. A matter of continuing concern. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 261, 278-281.
- Bless, C., Higson-Smith, C. & Kagee, A. (2006). *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods. An African Perspective (4th ed.)*. Cape Town. Juta and Co. Ltd.
- Bobzien, S. (1998). *Determinism and Freedom in Stoic Philosophy*. Oxford. Clarendon Press.
- Bolle, K.W., In: Eliade, M. (Ed). (1987). *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*. (5). New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Bray, R., Gooskens, I., Kahn, L., Moses, S. & Seekings, J. (2010). *Growing up in the New South Africa. Childhood and Adolescence in Post-Apartheid Cape Town*. Cape Town. HSRC Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. In T. Husen & T. N. Postlethwaite (eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Education* 3(2), 1643 – 1647). Oxford, UK: Pergamon Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Ceci, S. J. (1994). Nature-nurture Reconceptualized in Developmental Perspective: A biological model. *Psychological Review*, 101, 568 – 586.

- Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (1998). The ecology of developmental processes. In Damon, W. & Lerner, R. M. (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology, Vol. 1: Theoretical models of human development (5th ed.)*. New York: Wiley.
- Campbell, D. T. (1999). Legacies of Logical Positivism and Beyond., In *Social Experimentation* by Campbell, D.T & Russo, M. J., 131-144. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage.
- Cancer Facts and Figures*. (1994). New York: American Cancer Society.
- Cary, P. (2007). A Brief History of the Concept of Free Will: Issues That Are and Are Not Germane to Legal Reasoning. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*. (25), 165–181. DOI: 10.1002/bsl.748.
- Casey, B. J., Jones, R.M. & Hare, T. A. (2008). The Adolescent Brain. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, (1124), 111–126.  
DOI: 10.1196/annals.1440.010
- Charon, R., Greene, M. G. & Adelman, R. D. (1998). Qualitative Research in Medicine and Health Care: Questions and Controversy, a Response. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 13(1), 67-68. Retrieved from [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1496891/pdf/jgi\\_5.pdf](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1496891/pdf/jgi_5.pdf).
- Chavez LR, Hubbell FA, Mishra SI, Valdez RB. The influence of fatalism on self-reported use of Papanicolaou smears. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 1997;13:418–424.[PubMed]
- Chisholm, L., 2004. The quality of primary education in SouthAfrica. *Education*, April, 1–22. Retrieved from <http://www.ai.org.za/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/03/No.-72.The-Failing-Standard-of-Basic-Education-in-South-Africa1.pdf>.

- Chow, S. L. (2002). Methods in Psychological Research. In *Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (EOLSS)*, Eolss Publishers, Oxford, UK. Retrieved from <http://cogprints.org/2643/1/EOLSSrm.pdf>.
- Christensen, A., Moran, P., Ehlers, S., Raichle, K., Karnell, L., Funk, G. & Funk L. (1999). Smoking and Drinking Behaviour in Patients with Head and Neck Cancer: Effects of Behavioural Self-blame and Perceived Control. *Journal of Behavioural Medicine*. 22(5), 407-418.
- Cohen D, Nisbett R. (1989) Are there differences in fatalism between rural Southerners and Midwesterners? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. 28(2), 2181–2195.
- Cohen, R. J. & Swerdlik, M. E., (2010) *Psychological Testing and Assessment. An Introduction to Tests & Measurement*. Seventh Edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
- Coleman, C. & Hagell, H. (ed.) (2007). *Adolescent Risk and Resilience: Against the Odds*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
- Côté, J. E., & Levine, C. G. (2002). *Identity formation, agency, and culture: A social psychological synthesis*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cresswell, J. W. & Plano C. V. L. (2007). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cresswell, J. W. (2011). in Denzin, N. K, and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) (2011) Controversies in Mixed Methods Research. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publishers.
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). London: Sage.

- Curry, L. A., Nembhard, I., & Bradley E. H. (2009) Key Issues in Outcomes Research: *Qualitative and Mixed Methods Provide Unique Contributions to Outcomes Research*, (119), 1442-1452. PMID:19289649.
- Darke, P. R & Freedman, J. L. (1997). The Belief in Good Luck Scale. *Journal of Research In Personality*, (31), 486–511.
- D'Assonville, V (1981). *Bakens in die Dogmageskiedenis*. Kaapstad: NG Kerk Uitgewers.
- Davison C, Frankel S, Smith G. (1992). The limits of lifestyle: Re-assessing 'fatalism' in the popular culture of illness prevention. *Social Science & Medicine*. 34, 675–685. [PubMed]
- De Bilde, J.; Vansteenkiste, M. and Lens, W. (2011). Understanding the Association between future Time Perspective and Self-regulated Learning through the Lens of Self-determination Theory. *Learning and Instruction*. (21), 332-344. Elsevier Ltd.
- De Genova, N. (1995). Gangster Rap and Nihilism in Black America: Some Questions of Life and Death. *Social Text*. (43). Duke University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.nicholasdegenova.net/resources/De+Genova+-+Gangster+Rap+and+Nihilism.pdf>.
- De Minzi, M. C. R. (2003). Coping Assessment in Adolescents. *Adolescence*. Volume 38 (150), San Diego: Libra Publishers. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14560884>
- Deacon, .S. A. (2000). Creativity within Qualitative Research on Families: New Ideas for Old Methods. *The Qualitative Report*. 4(3 & 4). Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR4-3/deacon.html>.
- Deacon, H & Stephney, I. (1995) *Indigenous stories and storytellers*. Unpublished presentation to the HSRC.

- Dennet, D. C. (1984). *Elbow Room. The Varieties of Free Will Worth Wanting*. Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
- Denzin, N. K, & Lincoln, Y.S. (ed.) (2005) *The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles. SAGE Publishers.
- Department Basic Education. Republic of South Africa. (sine die) *National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Life Orientation Grades 10 – 12*.
- Diagnostic Overview (2011)*, Retrieved from <http://www.info.gov.za/368A0328-B6A5-4C3E-BF3C-8CF58BF7922C>.
- Donald, D., Lazarus, S., & Lolwana, P. (2010). *Educational Psychology in Social Context* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Drew, E. M. & Schoenberg, N. E. (2011). Deconstructing Fatalism. Ethnographic Perspectives on Women's Decision Making about Cancer prevention and Treatment. *NIH Public Access. Author manuscript*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3156035>.
- Dugandzic, M. (2012). *The Relationship between Philosophy and Theology: Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*. Institute of Religious Studies. Unpublished Term Paper. Retrieved from <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1USxTpodzLu0LLo6mqboS8qYbOJQCJM7cOs7vrlXcfas/edit>.
- Duke, N. N, Borowski, I. W., Pettingell, S. L., Skay, C & McMorris, B. J. (2011). *Adolescent Early Death Perception: Links to Behavioural and Life Outcomes in Young Adulthood*. *Journal of Paediatric Health Care*. 25(4), 224-234. DOI: 10.1016/j.acap.2009.02.004.
- Dunne, J., (1993). *Back to The Rough Ground*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

Durand, J. (1981). *Die Voorsienigheid*. Kaapstad: NG Kerk Uitgewers.

Durrheim, K. in Terre Blanch, M., Durrheim, K. & Painter, D. (2006). Research Design. Research Design in Practice. *Applied Methods for the Social Sciences*. University of Cape Town Press.

Duttweiler, P.C (1984). The Internal Control Index: A Newly Developed Measure of Locus of Control. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*. Retrieved from <http://epm.sagepub.com/content/44/2/209>.

Education WHITE PAPER 6. (2001). *Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*. Department of Education. Republic of South Africa. Pretoria: Blackmoon Advertising and Research.

Ekeke, E. C., (2011). African Tradition and Religion. A Conceptual Philosophical Analysis. *Lumina*. 22(2).

Esposito, J. L., Fashing, D. J., & Lewis, T (2002). *World Religions Today*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Feldman, S. S. & Elliot, G. R. (Eds.), *At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Freeman, H. (1989). *Cancer and the Socioeconomic Disadvantaged*. Atlanta: American Cancer Society.

Garbers, J. G. (1996). *Doeltreffende Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing. Navorsingsbestuur vir Navorsers, Studieleiers en M- en D- kandidate*. Pretoria: J.L. Van Schaik Uitgewers.

Garrison, K. C. & Garrison J. R. (1975). *Psychology of Adolescence*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc.

Giedd, J. N. (2008). The Teen Brain: Insights from Neuroimaging. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 42, 335–343.

- Given, L. M. (2008). *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods Volume 1&2*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications Inc.
- Goldstein, A. P. & Krasner, L. (Eds.) (1987). *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Grant, M. and Hallman, K. (2006). Pregnancy-related School Dropout and Prior School Performance in South Africa. *Population Council Division*. 2006 No. 212. Population Council, New York.
- Gravetter, F. J. and Forzano, L. B. (2009). *Research Methods for the Behavioural Sciences* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Gredler, M. E. (2012). Understanding Vygotsky for the Classroom: Is It Too Late? *Educational Psychology Review* (2012) 24:113–13. DOI 10.1007/s10648-011-9183-6. Springer Science+Business Media.
- Greenwell, A. N. and Cosden, M. (2009). The Relationship Between Fatalism, Dissociation and Trauma Symptoms in Latinos. *Journal of Trauma and Dissociation*, 10(3), 334-345. Routledge.
- Griffith, M. (2013). *Free Will. The Basics*. London: Routledge.
- Guba, E. G. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions and Emerging Confluences. In Denzin, N. K, and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) (2005). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publishers.
- Harp, G. (2007). *Boundary Expeditions: Strategies for Creative Research at the Interface of Art and Life Science*. Unpublished thesis. Indiana University.
- Heidegger, M., (1995). *Being and Time*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Henning, E., Van Rensburg, W. & Smith, B. (2004). *Finding your Way in Qualitative Research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.



- Heyns, J. A & Jonker, W. D., (1977). *Op Weg met die Teologie*. N.G. Kerkboekhandel. Pretoria.
- Holloway, I. (1997) *Basic Concepts for Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Blackwell Science.
- Honderich, T. (1988). *A Theory of Determinism. The Mind, Neuroscience, and Life-Hopes*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Honderich, T. (2005). *On Determinism and Freedom*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Jervolino, D. (1990). The Cogito and Hermeneutics: The Question of the Subject in Ricoeur. *Contributions to Phenomenology*. Dordrecht: Dordrecht University.
- Jones, S. E. (2011). A Brief Survey of Sir Isaac Newton's Views on Religion. In *Converging Paths to Truth*, Rhodes, M. D. & Moody, J. W. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 2011), 61–78. Retrieved from <http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/converging-paths-truth/brief-survey-sir-isaac-newtons-views-religion>.
- Kalichman, S.G., Kelly, J., Morgan., J. A. & Rompa, D. (1997). Fatalism, Current Life Satisfaction and Risk for HIV infection among Gay and Bisexual Men. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 64(4), 542-546. Pub Med.
- Kamper, G. (2008). A Profile of Effective Leadership in some South African High-poverty Schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 28, 1-18. EASA
- Keating, D. P. (1990). *Adolescent thinking*. In Feldman, S. S. & Elliot, G. R. (Eds.), *At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kempf-Leonard, K. (2005). *Encyclopedia of Social Measurement*. Volume 1. Oxford: Elsevier:

- Kierkegaard, S. (1947). *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*. Volume 1. Princeton, Princeton University Press.
- Klassen, A. C., Creswell, J., Plano Clark, V. L., Smith, K. C., & Meissner, H. I. (2012). Best practices in mixed methods for quality of life research [Commentary]. *Quality of Life Research*, DOI: 10.1007/s11136-012-0122-x
- Koneru, A., Sreemantula, S. & Rizwan, S. (2009). Endogenous Opioids: Their Physiological Role and Receptors: *Global Journal of Pharmacology*, 3(3), 149-153. IDOSI Publications.
- Konrad K., Firk C., & Ulhaas P. J. (2013). Brain Development during Adolescence: Neuroscientific Insights into this Developmental Period. *Deutsche Ärzteblatt International*, 110(25), 425–31. DOI: 10.3238/arztebl.2013.0425.
- Kubrin, C. E., (2005). *Gangstas, Thugs, and Hustlas: Identity and the Code of the Street in Rap Music*. George Washington University.
- Lannin, D., Mathews, H., Mitchell, J., Swanson, M., Swanson, F. & Edwards, M. (1998). Influence of Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors on Racial Differences in Late-Stage Presentation of Breast Cancer. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 279(22), 1801- 1807. Pub Med.
- LeBuffe, M. (2010) & Paul-Henri Thiry (Baron) d'Holbach, In Zalta, E. N. (Ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. , Retrieved from <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/holbach/>>.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lopez-McKee, G., McNiel, J. A.; Eriksen, E. & Ortiz, M. (2007). Spanish Translation and Cultural Adaptation of the Powe Fatalism Inventory. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 39(1), 68-70. Sigma Theta Tau International.
- Luciana, M. (2010). Adolescent Brain Development: Current Themes and Future Direction. Introduction to the Special Issues. *Brain and Cognition* 72(1), 1-

164. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/02782626/72/1>.

Luidens, D. A., & Nemeth, R. J. (1987). "Public" and "Private" Protestantism Reconsidered: Introducing the "Loyalists." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 26(4), 450-464. Retrieved from <http://www.psywww.com/psyrelig/journals/jssr.htm>.

Lukes, S. 1967. "Alienation and Anomie." *Philosophy, Politics and Society*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Series. In Laskett, P & Runcimann W, G., Oxford. U.K: Basil Blackwell.

Mail & Guardian, (2013) *Tony Yengeni, struggle veteran to flawed politician*. Retrieved from <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-08-13-tony-yengeni-struggle-veteran-to-flawed-politician>.

Marais, D. (2013). *Steedshierpolisiekar. 10 jaar later*. In: Die Burger, 23/02/2013. Cape Town: Media24.

Martin, J. and Sugarman, J. (2002). Agency and Soft Determinism in Psychology. In Atmanspacher, H. and Bishop, R. (Eds.). (2002). *Between Chance And Choice: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Determinism*. Thorverton: Imprint Academic.

Mc Millan, J. H. & Schumacher, S. (2006). *Research in Education. Evidence Based Inquiry*. Boston: Pearson Education Incorporated.

McAnarney, E. R., Adolescent Brain Development: Forging New Links? *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 42(4), 321–323. Elsevier.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative Research. A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam-WebsterOnlineDictionary,<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fatalism>.

- Mertens, D. M. (2003). Mixed methods and the Politics of Human Research: The Transformative-Emancipatory perspective. In Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (Eds.) *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research* (pp. 135-164). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Mertens, D. M. (2005). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology. Integrating Diversity with Quantitative, Qualitative and Mixed Methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- Mertens, D. M. (2009). *Transformative Research and Evaluation*. New York: Guilford.
- Mertens, D. M., Holmes, H. M., & Harris, R. L. (2009). Transformative research and ethics. In D. M. Mertens, & P. E. Ginsberg (Eds.), *The handbook of social research ethics* (pp. 85-101). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Meyer-Weitz, A. (2005). Understanding fatalism in HIV/AIDS protection: The Individual in Dialogue with Contextual Factors. *African Journal of AIDS Research* 2005, 4(2), 75–82. University of KwaZulu-Natal, School of Psychology. Retrieved from [www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.2989/1608590050949034](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.2989/1608590050949034).
- Mgibisa, M. (2009). South Africa: a fateful decision. *Chalkboard*, 04 June. Retrieved from <http://chalkboard.tol.org/south-africa>.
- Mkhize, N. (2006). Communal personhood and the principle of autonomy: The ethical challenges. *Continuing Medical Education* , 24(1), 26-29.
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1984). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods*. Beverley Hills, CA: Sage.
- Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Newbury Park, CA, Sage.

- Modisaotsile, B. M. (2012). The Failing Standard of Basic Education in South Africa. In: *Policy Brief. Africa Institute of South Africa*. No. 72 March 2012.
- Mouton, J. (2003). *How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral Studies (4th Impression)*. Pretoria: Van Schaick Publishers.
- Murphy, N. & Brown, W. S. (2007). *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It? Philosophical and Neurobiological Perspectives on Moral Responsibility and Free Will*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Myers, K. K. & Oetzel, J. G. (2003). Exploring the Dimensions of Organisational assimilation: Creating and Validating a Measure. *Communication Quarterly*, 51(4), 438 – 457.
- Naninck E. F, Lucassen P. J. & Bakker J (2011). Sex Differences in Adolescent Depression: Do Sex Hormones Determine Vulnerability? *Journal of Neuroendocrinology*, 23, 383–92. Retrieved from [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21418338](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21418338)
- National Curriculum Statement. (2010). *Guidelines for Inclusive Learning and Teaching*. Retrieved from [Curriculum.w.cape.school.za/](http://Curriculum.w.cape.school.za/).
- Ncgobo, D. (1999). Nihilism in Black South Africa: The New South Africa and the Destruction of the Black Domestic Periphery. In *Alternation*, 6(1), 138-154. Retrieved from <http://alternation.ukzn.ac.za/docs/06.1/09%20Ngc.pdf>.
- Nel, R. (2010). 'Youth in the Mission to Overcome Racism: the Formation and Development of the Christian Youth Movement in Southern Africa (1995-2005), *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, XXXVI(2), 187-205.
- Neff J. A, Hoppe S. K. (1993) Race/ethnicity, acculturation, and psychological distress: Fatalism and religiosity as cultural resources. *Journal of Community Psychology*. 21(1), 3–20.

- News24. (2007) *Yengeni's parole reviewed*. Retrieved from <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Review-Yengeni-parole-DA-20071126>).
- O'Connor, T. (2013). Free Will. In Zalta, E. N.(ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/freewill/>>.
- Oswald, M. M & Perold, M. D. (2011). Doing Reasonable Hope within a Cultural-Historical Activity Framework. *SAJHE*. Unisa Press.
- Patton, M. C. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications..
- Pereboom, D. (2001). *Living Without Free Will*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Perrin, J. S., Herve, P. Y., Leonard, G., Perron, M., Pike, G. B., Pitiot, A. et al. (2008). Growth of white matter in the adolescent brain: Role of testosterone and androgen receptor. *Journal of Neuroscience*, 28(38), 9519–9524.
- Piaget, J. (1950). *The psychology of intelligence*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Pillay, J. (2012). Keystone Life Orientation (LO) educators: Implications for Educational, Social, and Cultural Contexts *South African Journal of Education*, 32, 167-177. EASA.
- Powe, B. D & Johnson, A. (1995). Fatalism as a Barrier to Cancer Screening Among African-Americans: Philosophical Perspectives. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 34(2), 119-126.
- Powe, B. D. & Finnie, R. (2003). *Cancer Fatalism: The State of the Science*. *Cancer nursing*, 26(6), 454–465. Philadelphia: Lippencott Williams and Wilkins.

- Powe, B. D. (1994). *Fatalism and Participation in Colorectal Cancer Screening among Poor, Elderly, Black Individuals*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
- Praamsma, I. L. (1979). *De Kerk van Alle Tijden*. Nijkerk: Callenbach.
- Pratt, A, Nihilism. (*sine die*) *Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Embry-Riddle University, USA. Retrieved from: <http://www.iep.utm.edu/nihilism/#H3> on 15/01/2013.
- Rademeyer, J, (2007). Young, gifted and bad. *Sunday Times*, 04 February, 6.
- Resnik, D. B. (2011). *What is Ethics in Research and Why is it Important?* National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Retrieved from [www.niehs.gov/research/](http://www.niehs.gov/research/).
- Richardson, J. T. E. (1996) *Handbook of Qualitative Research Methods for Psychology and the Social Sciences*. BPS Books. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Roberts, E. R.; Roberts, C. R. & Chen, I. R (2000). Fatalism and Risk of Adolescent Depression. *Psychiatry*, 36(3), 239. Pro Quest.
- Rotter, J. B.; Seeman, M. & Liverant, S. (1962). *Internal versus External Control of Reinforcement: A Major Variable in Behaviour Theory*. In Washburn, N (Ed.). (1962). *Decisions, Values and Groups*. London: Pergamon.
- Setoaba, M. P. (2011). *The Implementation of the "No-fee" School Policy in Selected Primary Schools in Limpopo*. Unpublished Research Thesis. UNISA. 38.
- Scheier M, Bridges M. (1995). Person variables and health: Personality predispositions and acute psychological states as shared determinants for disease. *Psychosomatic Medicine*. 57, 255–268. [PubMed]
- Shaffer, D. R (1999). *Developmental Psychology : Childhood and Adolescence*. (5th Ed.). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

- Shen, L., Condit, C. M. & Wright, L., (2009). *The Psychometric Property and Validation of a Fatalism Scale*. Department of Speech Communication, University of Georgia. DOI: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2924582/>
- Silverman, D. (2010). *Doing Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Sisk C. L., Foster, D. L. (2004). The neural basis of puberty and adolescence. *Nature Neuroscience*, 7, 1040–1047.
- Smetana J. G., Campione-Barr, N., Metzger, A. (2006). Adolescent development in Interpersonal and Societal Contexts. *Annual. Review Psychology*, 57, 255–84. Department of Clinical & Social Sciences in Psychology, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York.
- Smythe, E. A., Ironside, P. M., Sims, S. L., Swenson, M. B. and Spence D. G., (2008). Doing Heideggerian hermeneutic research: A discussion paper. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 45, 1389–1397.
- Sobol-Kwapinska, M. (2009). *Forms of Present Time Orientation and Satisfaction with Life in the Context of Attitudes Towards Past and Future Social Behaviour and Personality*, 37(4), 433-440. Society of Personality Research Incorporated.
- Sokol, J. T. (2009). Identity Development Throughout the Lifetime: An Examination of Eriksonian Theory. *Graduate Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 1(2), Article 14. Retrieved from Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/gjcp/vol1/iss2/14>.
- Spiegelberg, H. (1982). *The phenomenological movement: A historical introduction*. (3rd revised & enlarged edition). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.



- Steginga, S. & Occhipinti, S. (2006). *Dispositional Optimism as a Predictor of Men's Decision Related Distress after Localized Prostate Cancer*. *Health Psychology*, 25(2), 135-143. [Pub Med].
- Steinberg, L. (2008). A Social Neuroscience Perspective on Adolescent Risk-Taking. *National Institute of Health*, 28(1), 78–106. DOI:10.1016/j.dr.2007.08.002.
- Straughan, P. T. and Seow, A. (1998). Fatalism Reconceptualised: A Concept to Predict Health Screening Behaviour. *Journal of Gender, Culture and Health*. 3(2), 85-100.
- Strianti, D. (2000). *An Introduction to Studying Popular Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Stroessner, S. J., Green, C. W. (2001) Effects of Belief in Free Will or Determinism on Attitudes Toward Punishment and External Locus of Control: *The Journal of Social Psychology*. 130 (6). Holland: Hope College.
- Suter, W. N. (2012). *Introduction to Educational Research. A Critical Thinking Approach*. (2nd edition). Arkansas: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Swanson, D. S., Edwards, M. C & Spencer, M. B (Eds.) (2010). *Adolescence, Development During a Global Era*, Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Swick, K. J., and Williams, R. D. (2005). An Analysis of Bronfenbrenner's Bio-Ecological Perspective for Early Childhood Educators: Implications for Working with Families Experiencing Stress. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 33(5).
- Szreter, A. (2000). Cronje names devil who made him do it. *The Guardian*, Friday 2 June 2000 22.13 BST. <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2000/jun/02/cricket>.
- Timeslive, (2013). *Jub-Jub's bail denied*. Retrieved from <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2013/09/14/jub-jub-s-bail-denied>

- Tudge, J. R. H., Mokrova, I., Hatfield, B. E. & Karnik, R. B (2009) Uses and Misuses of Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Theory of Human Development. *Journal of Family Theory and Review*, 1(4), 198-210. University of North Carolina.
- Tutu, D. (1999). *No Future without Forgiveness*. London: Ebury Publishing.
- Van Ackeren, G (*sine die*) *Reflections on the relationship between Philosophy and Theology*. St.Mary's College. Retrieved from <http://www.ts.mu.edu/readers/content/pdf/14/14.4/14.4.1.pdf> on 5/28/2013 at 10:51.
- Venter, E. & Rambau, E. (2011). The Effect of a Latchkey Situation on a Child's Educational Success. *South African Journal of Education*, 31, 345-356.
- Viney, W., Waldman, D. A. & Barchilon, J. (1982). Attitudes Towards Punishment in Relation to Beliefs in Free Will and Determinism.. *Human Relations*, 35, 16 (3). DOI: 10.1080/02615479711220271.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1994). The development of academic concepts in school-aged children. In R. van der Veer & J. Valsiner (Eds.), *The Vygotsky reader*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1997). Conclusion; further research; development of personality and world view in the child. In Rieber, R. W (Ed.), *Collected works of L. S. Vygotsky: Vol. 4. The history of development of the higher mental functions* (pp. 241–251). Original work published 1982–1984.
- Waldman, D. A., Viney, W., Bell, P.A, Bennett, J.B. & Hess, S. (1983). Internal and External locus of control in relation to beliefs in free will and determinism. *Psychological Reports: Volume 53, Issue* , pp. 631-634.
- Walsh, D. (2004). *Why do they act that way? A survival guide to the adolescent brain for you and your teen*. New York: Free Press.

- Ward, C. (2007). *'It feels like it's the end of the world': Cape Town's youth talk about gangs and community violence*. Monograph Series No. 136. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.
- Ward, C., Martin E., Theron, C. & Distiller, G. (2007). Factors affecting resilience in children exposed to violence. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 37(1), 165–187.
- Weeks, F. H. (2012). A Quest for a Culture of Learning: a South African Schools Perspective. *South African Journal of Education*, 32, 1-14. EASA.
- Weingarten, K (2010). Hope in a Time of Global Despair. *New Zealand Journal of Counselling*. 30(1), 1-12.
- Weingarten, K. (2010.) Reasonable Hope: Construct, Clinical Applications, and Supports. *Family Process*, 49(1), 6-24.
- West, C. (1993). *Race Matters*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Whelan, C. T. (1996). "Marginalization, Deprivation, and Fatalism in the Republic of Ireland: Class and Underclass Perspectives." *European Sociological Review*, 12(1), 33–51.
- Wilcke, M. M. (2002). Hermeneutic Phenomenology as a Research Method in Social Work. Retrieved from [http://fsw.ucalgary.ca/currents\\_prod\\_v1/articles/wilcke\\_v1\\_n1.htm](http://fsw.ucalgary.ca/currents_prod_v1/articles/wilcke_v1_n1.htm) (1 of 10) 2/7/2006 11:20:52 AM.
- Williams, Z. T. (1997). *Social Work Education: The International Journal*.
- Woolfolk, A, (2013). *Educational Psychology*. Global Edition. London: Pearson.
- Woolfolk, A. (2007). *Educational Psychology*. Global Edition. London: Pearson.

Yeager, D. S. and Dweck, C. S. (2012). Mindsets That Promote Resilience: When Students Believe That Personal Characteristics Can Be Developed. *Educational Psychologist*, 47(4), 302–314. Routledge.

**ADDENDUM A:**

**LETTER OF PERMISSION FROM THE WCED**



**REFERENCE:** 20130315-7989

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Rev Marthinus Brink  
Faculty of Education  
Stellenbosch University

**Dear Rev Marthinus Brink**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FATALISM INDEX FOR ADOLESCENTS**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Approval for projects should be conveyed to the District Director of the schools where the project will be conducted.
5. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
6. The Study is to be conducted from **01 February 2013 till 31 May 2013**
7. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
9. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
10. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
11. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
12. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services  
Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X9114  
CAPE TOWN  
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

**Directorate: Research**

**DATE: 15 March 2013**

**ADDENDUM B:**

**CLEARANCE FROM THE RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE - HUMAN  
RESEARCH (HUMANITIES) OF STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

## **Approved with Stipulations** **Response to Modifications- (New Application)**

10-Jun-2013  
Brink, Marthinus R  
Victoria Street  
Stellenbosch  
Stellenbosch, WC

Dear Rev Marthinus Brink,

The **Response to Modifications - (New Application)** received on **20-May-2013**, was reviewed by Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities) via Committee Review procedures on **07-Jun-2013**.

Please note the following information about your approved research protocol:

### **Present Committee Members:**

Beukes, Winston WA  
Horn, Lynette LM  
Somhlaba, Ncebazakhe NZ  
Van Wyk, Berte B

The Stipulations of your ethics approval are as follows:

**1. Terms such as 'fatalism' and 'focus groups' must be explained in all versions of the consent form and assent form.**

### **Standard provisions**

1. The researcher will remain within the procedures and protocols indicated in the proposal, particularly in terms of any undertakings made in terms of the confidentiality of the information gathered.
2. The research will again be submitted for ethical clearance if there is any substantial departure from the existing proposal.
3. The researcher will remain within the parameters of any applicable national legislation, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of research.
4. The researcher will consider and implement the foregoing suggestions to lower the ethical risk associated with the research.

You may commence with your research with strict adherence to the abovementioned provisions and stipulations.

Please remember to use your **protocol number (HS905/2013)** on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research protocol.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

### **After Ethical Review:**

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required.

The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) number REC-050411-032.

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki, the South African Medical Research Council Guidelines as well as the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health).

### **Provincial and City of Cape Town Approval**



Please note that for research at a primary or secondary healthcare facility permission must be obtained from the relevant authorities (Western Cape Department of Health and/or City Health) to conduct the research as stated in the protocol. Contact persons are Ms Claudette Abrahams at Western Cape Department of Health (healthres@pgwc.gov.za Tel: +27 21 483 9907) and Dr Helene Visser at City Health (Helene.Visser@capetown.gov.za Tel: +27 21 400 3981).

**Protocol #: HS905/2013**

**Title: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FATALISM SCALE FOR ADOLESCENTS**

Protocol/Approval Period: **07-Jul-2013 -06-Jun-2014**

Research that will be conducted at any tertiary academic institution requires approval from the relevant parties. For approvals from the Western Cape Education Department, contact Dr AT Wyngaard (awynjaar@pgwc.gov.za, Tel: 0214769272, Fax: 0865902282 <http://wced.wcape.gov.za>).

Institutional permission from academic institutions for students, staff & alumni. This institutional permission should be obtained before submitting an application for ethics clearance to the REC. Please note that informed consent from participants can only be obtained after ethics approval has been granted. It is your responsibility as researcher to keep signed informed consent forms for inspection for the duration of the research.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218839027.

Sincerely,

Susara Oberholzer  
REC Coordinator  
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)



UNIVERSITEIT-STELLENBOSCH-UNIVERSITY  
Jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

**Approval Notice**  
Stipulated documents/requirements

01-Nov-2013  
Brink, Martinus R.  
Victoria Street  
Stellenbosch  
Stellenbosch, WC

Proposal #: HS905/2013  
Title: Exploring fatalism in adolescents

Dear Rev Martinus Brink,

Your Stipulated documents/requirements received on 01-Nov-2013, was reviewed by members of the Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities) via Expedited review procedures on 01-Nov-2013 and was approved.

Sincerely,

Susara Oberholzer  
REC Coordinator  
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

**ADDENDUM C:**

**LETTERS REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

Die Hoof



15-01-2013

Geagte Meneer



Versoek om navorsing te doen by



Ek versoek u vriendelik om aan my toestemming te gee om 'n groep leerders van [redacted] Sekondêre Skool te gebruik in my navorsing ter voltooiing van 'n M.Ed –graad (Leerder-ondersteuning) aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch. U toestemming sal van groot hulp in my navorsing wees en opreg waardeur word. Dit sal die volgende behels.

1. NAVORSINGSONDERWERP: DIE ONTWIKKELING VAN 'n FATALISME SKAAL VIR ADOLESSENTE

*Fatalisme* is die kognitiewe persepsie wat 'n persoon laat glo dat hy/sy geen beheer oor sy/haar omstandighede het en dat dit ook nie deur sy/haar gedrag of handeling verander kan word nie. Hierdie soort denke mag 'n beduidende invloed hê op die wyse waarop adolessente hulle interaksie met die skoolkurrikulum benader. Leerders uit 'n spesifieke agtergrond mag deur hierdie denkwys in 'n bepaalde gemoedstoestand vasgevang wees. Dit mag hulle akademiese betrokkenheid en vordering in die onderwysstelsel belemmer.

Die doel van die navorsing is om 'n psigometriese instrument te ontwerp wat ander navorsers, skoolberaders en sielkundiges kan gebruik om die fatalisme in adolessente te herken.

2. DEELNAME PROTOKOL

2.1 Deelname aan die navorsing is vrywillig. Alle leerders sal 'n vorm vir skriftelike instemming van my ontvang. Alle personele wat betrokke is, sowel as die ouers van leerders jonger as 18 sal versoek word om persoonlike toestemmingsbriewe te onderteken.

Alle kommunikasie sal skriftelik deur die kantoor van die skoolhoof geskied en die departementshoof vir Lewensoriëntering, die skoolberader/sielkundige of die koördineerder van die Onderwyser Ondersteuningspan insluit.

Vertroulikheid en die veilige bewaring van rekords word gewaarborg.

3. DIE NAVORSINGSPROSES:

3.1 Die deelnemers aan die navorsing sal alle graad 11 leerders in u skool wees, asook agt graad 11-leerders wat vrywillig sal deelneem aan fokusgroep-besprekings.

3.2 Die eerste fase van die navorsing behels 'n gestruktureerde fokusgroepbespreking met agt graad 11-leerders. Dit sal na skool geskied en die navorser sal toesien dat dit nie met enige buitemuure aktiwiteite van die leerders inmeng nie. Dit sal ongeveer een uur duur.

Gedurende die tweede fase sal die graad 11 leerders gevra word om vier vraelyste onder my toesig te voltooi: "The Belief in Good Luck"-skaal, die Interne Kontrole Indeks 'n Fatalisme indeks en die Beck Depressie Inventaris. Laasgenoemde is nodig as 'n metode om die navorsing te kontroleer. Dit kan tydens 'n Lewensoriënteringperiode plaasvind omdat dit inskakel met die leerders se refleksie oor hul eie persoonlike welsyn. Dit behoort nie meer as 50 minute se lestyd in beslag te neem nie.

3.3 Die tyd en datums van die data-insameling sal met elke skool afsonderlik gereël word.

#### 4. NAVRAE

Alle navrae in verband met die navorsing kan gerig word aan:

Ds Ryk Brink  
Sel nr: [REDACTED]  
E-pos: [rykbrink@gmail.com](mailto:rykbrink@gmail.com)

Posbus 198  
Riebeek Kasteel  
7307

Of aan:

Dr. Marietjie Oswald: Supervisor  
Department Opvoedkundige Sielkunde  
[mmoswald@sun.ac.za](mailto:mmoswald@sun.ac.za)

Me. Mariechen Perold  
Dept Opvoedkundige Sielkunde  
[mdperold@sun.ac.za](mailto:mdperold@sun.ac.za)

U positiewe respons, op skrif of per e-pos, sal opreg waardeur word. Ek versoek u vriendelik om u antwoord op 'n briefhoof van die skool, in harde kopie, gereed te maak. Dit moet ook 'n skoolstempel dra. Die etiese komitee van die Universteit vereis dit so. Ek sal die brief persoonlik by die skool kom afhaal op Woensdag, 6 Februarie.

Vriendelike groete.

Die uwe

---

Ds. Ryk Brink (BA, BTh (US), NOS (UNISA))



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

The Headmaster



15-01-2013

Dear Mr [REDACTED]

Request for permission to do research at [REDACTED]

I kindly request your permission to use a group of learners from [REDACTED] as part of the completion of a research project for the MEd degree (Learner Support) at Stellenbosch University. Your permission will be of great assistance in my endeavours and will be much appreciated. This will entail the following:

1. RESEARCH TOPIC: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FATALISM SCALE FOR ADOLESCENTS.

Fatalism is the cognitive perception that leads a person to think that he/she cannot control his or her circumstances by changing his/her behaviour or actions. It is the belief that everything is predetermined and we have no control over it.

This kind of thinking may have a profound influence on the way in which adolescents approach their engagement in the school curriculum. Learners from a specific background may be trapped by this kind of reasoning in a specific state of mind, thereby hindering their academic engagement with and progress in the education system.

The purpose of this research is to design a psychometric instrument that other researchers, school counsellors and psychologists may use in identifying this specific problem in adolescents.

2. PARTICIPATION PROTOCOL

2.1 Participation in the research is voluntary. All learners will receive a form of personal assent from the researcher. All staff members involved and the parents of students under the age of 17 will be asked to complete personal consent forms.

All communication will be done in writing through the office of the principal, the HOD for Life Orientation and the school counsellor/psychologist or the coordinator of the Teacher Support Team.

Confidentiality and safe-keeping of records is guaranteed by the researcher.

3. RESEARCH PROCESS

- 3.1 The participants in the research will be all grade 11 learners at your school and 8 grade 11 learners who will volunteer to take part in a focus group interview.
- 3.2 The first phase of the research will entail structured focus group discussions with eight grade 11 learners. This will be done after school hours and the researcher will ensure that it does not impede on any extra-mural activities of the students involved. In the second phase, I will, supervised by the Life Orientation educators for grade 11 ask the grade 11 learners to complete four questionnaires: The Belief in Good Luck Scale, the Internal Control Index, a Fatalism Index and the Beck Depression Inventory. This could take place during a Life Orientation period as it ties in with learners' reflection on personal well-being. This should not occupy more than 50 minutes of lesson time.
- 3.3 The times and dates of the data collection will be arranged with each school individually.

#### 4. ENQUIRIES

All enquiries about the research may be directed to:

Rev Ryk Brink  
Phone: [REDACTED]  
E-mail: [rykbrink@gmail.com](mailto:rykbrink@gmail.com)

PO Box 198  
Riebeek Kasteel  
7307

Or

Dr Marietjie Oswald: Supervisor  
Department of Educational Psychology  
[mmoswald@sun.ac.za](mailto:mmoswald@sun.ac.za)

Ms Mariechen Perold  
Dept. of Educational Psychology  
[mdperold@sun.ac.za](mailto:mdperold@sun.ac.za)

Your positive response will be deeply appreciated. Would you please respond either in writing or via e-mail on a letterhead of the school. The letter must also contain the official stamp of the school. I will appreciate it if you could have the reply ready on Wednesday, 6 March. I will collect it personally from the school.

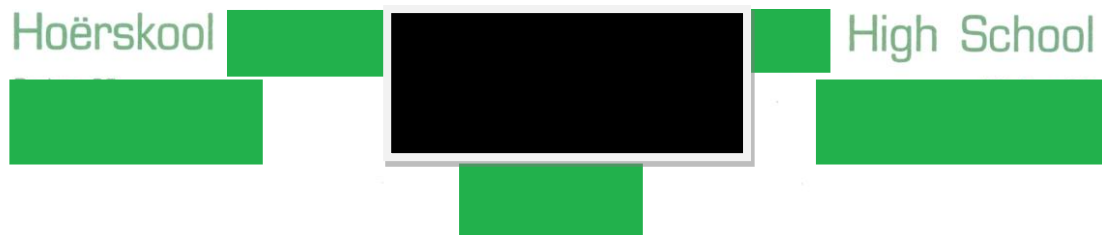
Yours sincerely

---

Rev. Ryk Brink (BA. BTh. PGCE)

**ADDENDUM D:**

**LETTERS OF PERMISSION GRANTED BY THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**



Universiteit Stellenbosch  
Vir Aandag: Ds. Ryk Brink, Dr. M Oswald, Me. M Perold  
Departement Opvoedkundige Sielkunde  
Stellenbosch

04 Maart 2013

Aan wie dit mag aangaan:

Insake: Versoek om navorsing by Hoërskool [redacted]

Hiermee word toestemming verleen aan Ds. Brink om navorsing te doen van die ontwikkeling van 'n fatalisme skaal vir adolessente by Hoërskool [redacted]

Met dank





06 March 2013

Dear Mr Brink

I, the principal have read the letter about your research that you want to conduct here at school with our Grade 11 learners.

Permission is hereby given to you to conduct this research.

Yours truly

A black rectangular redaction box covers the signature of the principal. Below it is a purple rectangular redaction box, likely covering the principal's name.

A large purple rectangular redaction box covers the contact information, likely including a phone number and email address.



4 March 2013

Rev Ryk Brink  
P O Box 198  
RIEBEEK KASTEEL  
7307

Dear Rev Brink

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [REDACTED]

Permission is hereby granted for you conduct research at CBC [REDACTED] Development of a Fatalism Scale for Adolescents".

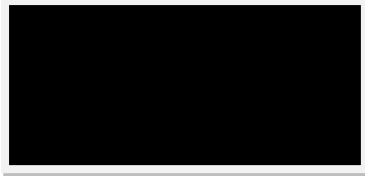
Kindly keep the writer informed of the progress of the research.

We wish you luck with your research.

Yours sincerely



HEAD OF COLLEGE



HOËRSKOOI • HIGH SCHOOL

SKOOLHOOF: POSBUS / PO BOX 181

4 Maart 2013

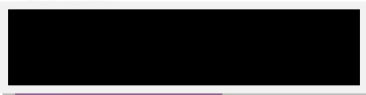
Dr. Marietjie Oswald: Supervisor  
Departement Opvoedkundige Sielkunde  
[mmoswald@sun.ac.za](mailto:mmoswald@sun.ac.za)

**VERSOEK OM NAVORSING TE DOEN BY HOËRSKOOI**

Hiermee gee ek, [redacted], toestemming dat ds. Ryk Brink 'n groep van Hoërskool [redacted] se leerders mag gebruik in sy navorsing ter voltooiing van 'n M.Ed -graad (Leerderondersteuning) aan die Universiteit Stellenbosch.

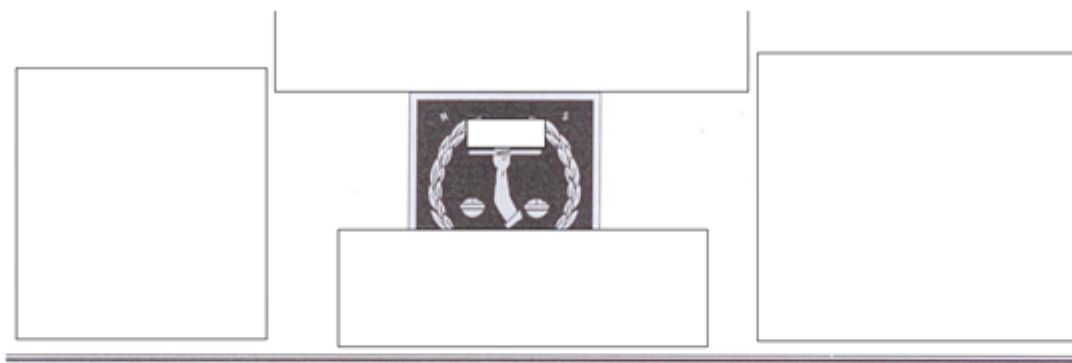
Vriendelike groete

Die uwe



SKOOLHOOF





2013-03-06

Geagte mnr. Brink

Ek het u navorsingsvoorstel gelees. Hiermee verleen ek,  Waarnemende  
Prinsipaal toestemming dat u met die navorsingstaak mag voortgaan by  Sekondêr.

Die uwe

  
  
WND. PRINSIPAAL

WES-KAAP ONDERWYSDEPT  
POSBUS 1

**ADDENDUM E:**

**LETTER OF ASSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS**



STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND ASSENT FORM**

**TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:** *EXPLORATION OF FATALISM IN ADOLESCENTS*

**RESEARCHER'S NAME:** Ryk Brink

**ADDRESS:** [REDACTED]

**CONTACT NUMBER:** [REDACTED] **rykbrink@gmail.com**

### **What is RESEARCH?**

Research is something we do to find new knowledge about the way things (and people) work. We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about people's problems. Research also helps us to find better ways of helping, or treating children with specific problems.

### **What is this research project all about?**

This research project is about finding a way to help teenagers to study better and to be more successful in their studies. Many teenagers are not motivated to study or even to attend school, because they do not believe that they can change their circumstances themselves. We call this fatalism. This is what we will investigate in this research.

### **Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?**

By participating in this research, you may contribute to the better understanding of the behaviour of teenagers. If we can understand why teenagers sometimes are reluctant to engage in academic programmes and work, we may be able to help them to become successful too. You can make a valuable contribution in this regard.

### **Who is doing the research?**

This research is done by myself, Ryk Brink. I am a part-time minister and a full time teacher at CBC St. John's in Parklands in Cape Town. I am conducting this research to obtain my Masters degree in Education.

### **What will happen to me in this study?**

### Focus group interviews:

If you volunteer to be one of the eight learners taking part in the focus group discussions, you and your friends will discuss very interesting topics with me. Participation is absolutely voluntary. It will give you the opportunity to find out more about the behaviour of yourself and your friends and how you engage with your school work. All information is confidential and will only be conveyed to the school counsellor if there is a risk that you may feel an intense emotional response during the interview.

### Can anything bad happen to me?

Nothing can go wrong. All that may happen is that you may feel slightly uncomfortable in answering one or two of the questions. You don't have to worry, because all information will be kept confidential.

### Can anything good happen to me?

You may be stimulated to think a little bit about yourself and to make better decisions. You will definitely help someone else in future to do the same when they benefit from the results of the research.

### Will anyone know I am in the study?

All grade 11s will be asked to volunteer for the study. Remember that your information will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear on any document. We are going to use a code system that will only be known to myself.

### Who can I talk to about the study?

You may contact me using the following contact details:

Dr. Marietjie Oswald: Supervisor  
Department of Educational Psychology  
mmoswald@sun.ac.za  
Tel: +27 21 808 2258

Mrs. Mariechen Perold  
Department of Educational Psychology  
mdperold@sun.ac.za  
Tel: +27 21 808 2258

### What if I do not want to do this?

You don't have to take part, even though your parents gave their consent. You may opt out at any stage without being penalised in any way.

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?

YES

NO

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

YES

NO

Do you understand that you can pull out of the study at any time?

YES

NO

Signature of Child:

Date:

**ADDENDUM F:**

**LETTER OF PARENTAL CONSENT**





UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

## STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

---

### *THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FATALISM SCALE FOR ADOLESCENTS*

You are requested to let your child participate in a research study conducted by Ryk Brink (BA, BTh, PGCE) from the Department of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will contribute to the completion of a research thesis for a MEd degree. Your child has been selected as a possible participant in this study because he/she is a grade 11 learner at one of the schools selected for the research.

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to develop a measuring instrument (a Fatalism Index) to establish why individual learners do not engage with the education system efficiently or benefit from it.

#### **2. PROCEDURES**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Non-participation will not put your child at any disadvantage. If your child volunteers to participate in this study, we would ask him/her to do the following:

- A few weeks before the collection of the data, all grade 11 learners in the school where your child attends, will be asked to participate in the research voluntarily.
- If your child volunteers to be one of eight learners to take part in the focus group discussions, he or she will be involved in a group discussion about fatalism among adolescent learners by the researcher. Participation is voluntary and will take place after school.
- Recruitment for the research will be done by the Grade 11 Life Orientation Teacher or the School Counsellor or Intervention Co-ordinator.
- During the data-collection, your child will be requested to complete four questionnaires – the “Belief in Good Luck Scale”, the Internal Control Index, The Beck Depression Inventory and a Fatalism Index.
- These questionnaires will be completed during a Life Orientation period. All information is confidential and will only be conveyed to the school counsellor if there is a risk that your child may show signs of depression.
- The research will take up 2-3 hours of your child’s time, with an extra hour added if he or she takes part in the focus group discussion. Only the focus group discussion will take place after school hours.

#### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The only real risk is that, on completion of the BDI-II, it may seem that your child may be at risk of suffering from depression. In this case, the information will immediately be communicated to the school principal and counsellor, who will contact you regarding further support. A registered clinical or educational psychologist will be available for further reference.

M-NED Eden District – George Schools (WCED)  
ROGER JACOBS: 044 8038300 (M-NED OFFICE)  
26 Caledon Street/Straat, George, 6529, Tel: 0448 730 171

NOLINE-ANN STRYDOM [PR.NO](mailto:PR.NO): 8616124  
M-NED West Coast/Winelands  
For Wellington/Tulbach based schools:  
M-NED office (WCED – Malmesbury), 022-4822738

HENRI VILJOEN  
Cell: 0823803299  
PRACTICE NUMBER: 8645019  
Registration nr: 0066656

SURETTE ANDERSEN  
GEORGE GROENEWALD  
M-NED Office (WCED Paarl), 021-8601226

For CBC St. Johns  
JUDITH BREDEKAMP  
CBC ST. JOHN'S, PARKLANDS  
REGISTRATION NR: 0102148  
Practice nr:086 000 0294055

#### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

By participating in the research, your child will have the opportunity to do self-reflection, especially regarding his/her attitude towards school work and the educational process in general. This may lead to positive decision making regarding his/her own responsibility to achieve success in future.  
By participating in the research, your child may contribute to the better understanding of fatalism among adolescent learners and to creating a solution to the problem in schools.

#### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

Participation is voluntary. Participants will not be remunerated.

#### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

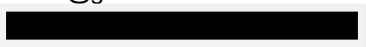
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All data collected will only be accessed by the researcher. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with the school or participants will remain confidential and will be disclosed only as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using pseudonyms or assigning a code to the school and all relevant participants. The school or any individuals partaking in the study will therefore not be identified and their identities will remain anonymous. Only where there is concern that your child may show signs of depression will the information be conveyed to the school principal and school counsellor.

#### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

Your child can choose whether to be in this study or not. If your child volunteers to be in this study, you may withdraw him or her at any time without consequences of any kind. Your child may also refuse to answer any questions he/she does not want to answer and remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw him/her from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

#### **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the following people:

Ryk Brink  
E-pos: [rykbrink@gmail.com](mailto:rykbrink@gmail.com)  
Selfoon: 

My supervisors at the university are:

Dr Marietjie Oswald: Supervisor  
Department Opvoedkundige Sielkunde  
[mmoswald@sun.ac.za](mailto:mmoswald@sun.ac.za)

Me. Mariechen Perold  
Departement Opvoedkundige Sielkunde  
[mdperold@sun.ac.za](mailto:mdperold@sun.ac.za)

#### **9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development, Stellenbosch University.



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY

jou kennisvenoot • your knowledge partner

Dear Parent/Guardian

2013-03-22

Hereby I request your permission for your child to take part in the research study as explained in the information leaflet. Your co-operation will be much appreciated and will contribute to the development of a psychological questionnaire, aimed at assisting counsellors and psychologists to assist our children in a better way.

Please fill in your child's name on this form, sign it and return it as soon as possible to your child's grade 11 register teacher. Thank you for your kind co-operation.

Kindest regards,

Ryk Brink

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was described to \_\_\_\_\_ (participant/learner's name) by RYK BRINK in *English* and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to *[me/him/her]*. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to *[my/his/her]* satisfaction.

I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Subject/Participant (Learner)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Parent or legal Guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Parent or legal Guardian**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [*his/her*] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the representative*]. [*He/she*] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [*Afrikaans/\*English/\*Xhosa/\*Other*] and [*no translator was used/this conversation was translated into* \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



**ADDENDUM G:**

**LETTER OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS**



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY**  
**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

---

*EXPLORING FATALISM IN ADOLESCENTS*

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Ryk Brink (BA, BTh, PGCE) from the Departments of Educational Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of this study will contribute to the completion of a research thesis for an MEd degree. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are a grade 11 learner and fit into the category of adolescence.

**1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore fatalism in adolescence as a possible factor that may influence their education and learning.

**2. PROCEDURES**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Non-participation will not put you at any disadvantage. If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following:

- If you volunteer to be one of eight learners to take part in the focus group discussions, you will be involved in a group discussion about fatalism among adolescent learners led by me the researcher. Participation is voluntary.

**3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The only real risk is that you may have an emotional response during the interview. In this case, the information will be communicated to the school principal and counsellor immediately, and I will, with their co-operation, contact you regarding further support. A registered clinical or educational psychologist will be available for further reference.

M-NED Eden District – George Schools (WCED)  
ROGER JACOBS: 044 8038300 (M-NED OFFICE)  
NOLINE-ANN STRYDOM PR.NO: 8616124  
Tel: 0448 730 171

26 Caledon Street/Straat, George, 6529.

M-NED West Coast/Winelands  
For Wellington/Tulbach based schools:

HENRI VILJOEN  
Cell: 0823803299  
PRACTICE NUMBER: 8645019  
Registration nr: 0066656

PAARL SIELKUNDIGE DIENSTE

SURETTE ANDERSEN  
M-NED office (WCED – Malmesbury)  
4822738  
GEORGE GROENEWALD  
M-NED Office (WCED Paarl)  
021-8601226

022-

For CBC St. Johns  
JUDITH BREDEKAMP  
CBC ST. JOHN'S, PARKLANDS  
REGISTRATION NR: 0102148  
Practice nr:086 000 0294055

#### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

By participating in the research, you will have the opportunity to do self-reflection, especially regarding your attitude towards school work and the educational process in general. This may lead to positive decision making regarding your own responsibility to achieve success in future.  
By participating in the research, you may contribute to the better understanding of fatalism among adolescent learners and to creating a solution to the problem in schools.

#### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

Participation is voluntary. Participants will not be remunerated.

#### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**


Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you, will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. All data collected will only be accessed by the researcher. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with the school or participants will remain confidential and will be disclosed only as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using pseudonyms or assigning a code to the school and all relevant participants. The school or any individuals partaking in the study will therefore not be identified and their identities will remain anonymous. Only where there is concern that you may show signs of depression will the information be conveyed to the school principal and school counsellor.

#### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

#### **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the following people:

Ryk Brink  
E-pos: [rykbrink@gmail.com](mailto:rykbrink@gmail.com)  
Cell phone: 

My supervisors at the university are:

Dr. Marietjie Oswald: Supervisor  
Department Opvoedkundige Sielkunde  
[mmoswald@sun.ac.za](mailto:mmoswald@sun.ac.za)

Me. Mariechen Perold  
Departement Opvoedkundige Sielkunde  
[mdperold@sun.ac.za](mailto:mdperold@sun.ac.za)

#### **9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development, Stellenbosch University.

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was described to [me/the subject/the participant] by \_\_\_\_\_ in [Afrikaans/English/Xhosa/other] and [I am/the subject is/the participant is] in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to [me/him/her]. [I/the participant/the subject] was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to [my/his/her] satisfaction.

[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study/I hereby consent that the subject/participant may participate in this study. ] I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Subject/Participant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the subject/participant] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the representative]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in [Afrikaans/\*English/\*Xhosa/\*Other] and [no translator was used/this conversation was translated into \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_].

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Investigator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**



## **ADDENDUM H**

### **CHRONOLOGY OF THE PROCESS OF INQUIRY**

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE PROCESS OF INQUIRY

- November 2012: Formulating of the research proposal and consultation with supervisors.
- December 2012 – February 2013:  
Drafted the final research proposal and application for ethical clearance to the Research Ethical Committee
- March 2013:  
Handed in the application to the REC on 08/03/2013.  
Handed in of application for permission to do research from the WCED on 08/03/2013.  
Received clearance to do research from the WECD on 15/03/2013  
Obtained permission from school principals to do the research at their schools  
Commenced with the survey of subject literature
- April 2013:  
Reviewing subject literature.  
Awaiting an answer from the REC committee
- May 2013  
Contiuing literature review  
Received first answer from the REC with proposed alterations.  
Redrafting of application to the REC
- June 2013 – July 2013:  
Continuing literature review  
Received final ethical clearance from REC on 10/06/2013  
Contacted the schools to set up meetings with principals and research participants to discuss the research protocol, procedures and methods.  
Conducted the first creative strategy sessions at schools.  
Selected the participants for the focus group interviews.  
Conducted the focus group interviews  
Selected the participants for individual interviews  
Conducted individual interviews
- August::  
Began with data analysis
- September – November:  
Handed in of the chapters of the thesis to my supervisors, including the description and discussion of the data and final conclusion.  
Final editing of the thesis manuscripts.  
Obtained permission to submit the thesis for degree purposes from supervisors
- November: 01/10/2012 Submit thesis for assessment

**ADDENDUM I:**

**EXCERPT FROM THE FOCUS GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

THEMES	CATEGORIES	SUB-CATEGORIES
THEME 1: BELIEFS ABOUT LIFE		
	Positive beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life is good</li> </ul>
	Negative beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life is bad</li> </ul>
	Ambivalent beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life is confusing</li> <li>Life is negative and positive</li> </ul>
THEME 2: BELIEFS ABOUT EXTERNAL INFLUENCES		
	Beliefs about God and religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beliefs about God's control over life</li> <li>Beliefs about a higher power's predetermined plan</li> <li>Beliefs that God has created us with predetermined abilities and potential</li> <li>Beliefs about God as an enabling force in one's life</li> <li>Beliefs about the devil as a disabelling force in one's life</li> </ul>
	Beliefs about the influence of the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effect of the economic environment</li> <li>Beliefs of the social environment</li> </ul>
	Beliefs about the relations between the self and other selves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Influence of peers</li> <li>Influence of parents</li> <li>Beliefs of the other as a threat to the self</li> <li>Beliefs of the effect of economic injustice on the self</li> <li>Beliefs of the effect of racial injustice on the self</li> <li>Beliefs of the effect of gender inequality on the self</li> </ul>
THEME 3: BELIEFS OF SELF AGENCY		
	Beliefs about own efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beliefs of freedom of the will within a greater plan</li> <li>Fixed beliefs about own potential</li> </ul>
	Beliefs about own efficacy based on perceptions of the other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beliefs of efficacy based on feedback from others</li> </ul>

D 6: Ek stem saam met hom dat ek onveilig voel. Want as 'n mens kyk wat deesdae aangaan in die **BUURT WANNEER HULLE INBREEK EN VROU KANNIE MEER ALEEN WEES NIE, NIE EERS 'n MAN NIE, JY VERWAG SOORT VAN 'n AANVAL. JY KAN OOK NIE IN DIE NATUUR WEES NIE, WANT (PASSAGE UNCLEAR) IEMAND SIT AGTER DIE EERSTE BOS EN HULLE GAAN JOU GRYP EN SO AAN. SO DIS SO ONVEILIG. JA DIT IS LEKKER OM TYD IN VELD TE SPANDEER, (PASSAGE UNCLEAR) EN DIT RAAK NET AL HOE ERGER** [Environment as threat; anxiety; nowhere safe anymore; experience of increasing threat from environment]

D3: Oom ek stem saam met haar oor die hele deurmekaar storie, **WANT BAIE JONMENSE WEET NIE WAT HULLE GAAN DOEN EENDAG NIE, HULLE WEET NIE WAT HULLE GAAN DOEN EENDAG ENIE EN WAT VOORLE NIE...EN DIT**

**GAAN SAAM MET DIE ONVEILIG WEES. JY WEET NIE WAT OM TE VERWAG NIE** – jy is **DEURMEKAAR OOR WAT GAAN MET JOU GEBEUR.** [Uncertainty about the future; expect the future to be unsafe; sense of not being in control of their destiny]

OK. Ons het nou 'n bietjie gesels en ek hoor die woorde 'onveilig' 'onseker' bang, jy weet nie wat gaan gebeur nie.... Nog iemand wat iets wil se?

D6: Ek dink die lewe is **BAIE ONREGVERDIG** [**Life is unfair**]

**Onregverdig?**

D6: **NIE ALTYD NIE, MAAR PARTY MENSE VERDIEN HULLE PUNTE EN PARTY KOM OP SKOOL EN HET ALLES SO MAKLIK** [**maybe feelings of luck or randomness?**]. **DIS NIE HULLE SKULD NIE, MAAR HULLE LAAT DIT SO MAKLIK LYK EN JY MOET BAIE HARDER AS HULLE WERK VIR WAT JY WIL BEREIK** [**LIFE IS EASY FOR SOME – DIFFICULT FOR OTHERS; fixed internal theory about own abilities**]

*Sou jy se vir party mense kom dit maklik, hulle het dit maklik in die lewe, hulle kry wat hulle wil he m met die minimum effort wil ek amper se?*

D6: Ja en ander mense moet baie hard werk om...

D7: Hulle kry dit heelwat makliker wat hulle wil he.

*Maar jy dink nie, Jy dink nie dat dit noodwendig te doen het met geluk nie, met good luck nie – party mense is maar net lucky?*

D4: **DIS MAAR IN JOU IN HOE JY GEBORE IS AS JY SO IS. DIT GAAN NIE OOR GELUK OF WAT OOK AL NIE – DIS MAAR HOE JY IS. JY KAN NIE DAARVOOR HELP NIE SO, DIS NIEMAND SE SKULD NIE.** [Determinism; despondency; outside of control; not able to influence the situation]

*OK. Baie interessant. Baie dankie. Ons het nou 'n paar lekker bydraes gehad op hierdie punt. Hoe verstaan jy die idee dat, watter hoër mag jy ookal in glo, bepaal hoe die lewe gaan uitwerk? Hoe verstaan jy dit? Daar is 'n idee dat ons lewens deur 'n hoër mag bepaal word. Sommige mense se jou lewe word bepaal deur God. Ander mense noem die hoër mag iets anders, party godsdienste praat daarvan as karma of so...hoe verstaan jy die idee – dink jy dis waar, diink jy dis nie waar nie – hoe dink jy daaroor?*

D6: Soos gister het oom gepraat van is daar 'n plan vir jou toekoms... is daar 'n plan

**HY GEE VIR JOU 'N PLAN MAAR HY GEE OOK VIR JOU OPSIES OOR WAT JY VANDAG BEPLAN EN WAT (PASSAGE UNCLEAR) MAAK JY MET JOU EIE TOEKOMS** [SYNTHESIS: Soft determinism between free will and a set plan; agency within a determined plan; self-efficacy]

*OK, so 'n mens het so binne-in die groter plan het jy nog 'n keuse. Dis soos jy dink, OK?*